CA YANDAMOORI VEERENDRANATH

THE 5 STEPS TO SUCCESS

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YANDAMOORI VEERENDRANATH

Yandamoori Veerendranath is a multifaceted personality- an acclaimed playwright, reputed novelist, movie director, personality development and motivational speaker, columnist for The Hindu, and Sahitya Academy award winner. He is a practicing Chartered Accountant and had worked with various financial institutions as a senior executive.

His works have been translated into Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, English and Hindi languages. His TV show, "Journey towards Success" in Telugu won two Golden Nandi awards from the government of Andhra Pradesh for best direction and production.

He penned dialogues for the Dada Phalke Award winner Mrinal Sen's 'Oka voori katha' that won 'best regional film' award from the President of India. He is associated with more than 30 Telugu films that include 'Abhilasha', 'Challenge' and 'Jagadeka Veerudu–Athiloka Sundari' as script writer. He also directed films with prominent movie stars like Chiranjeevi.

In an opinion poll conducted by a literary magazine Andhra Jyothi in 1982, he was voted as one of the four most popular persons of the state, along with Shri N.T. Ramarao and Director Bapu.

He built a 'Vidya Peetam' and a temple for Goddess Saraswathi at Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, a one-crore project for tribal and poor students, to impart the importance of education and personality development free of cost.

His book **Vijayaniki aidu Metlu** (The 5 Steps to Success) holds an all-time record in Telugu literature, surpassing sales of more than twenty million (two crore) rupees.

For more information visit:
www.yandamoori.com

REVEIWS ON THE ORIGINAL VERSION

Only few motivational books are available in Telugu that too catering to the needs of students. Here comes a book, scripted in easy language for all cross sections of people. The significance of this book is that you won't stop till the end once you start reading. *- Eenadu*

This is not a book to be read in libraries or by borrowing from friends. Own it. Keep aside the cost of this book in your next budget. *-Vanita*

There is no doubt about it. From failure to success… these five steps would certainly help. This is a sensational book. Many of the life-examples are the writer's own, unlike the works of other Telugu writers who quote from English books. *-Andhrajyothi*

The secret of success of this book is in dividing the chapters into five, titling them aptly and giving what the reader expects from it. The writer has to be appreciated for his skills. *-Andhrajyothi daily*

This (Kannada) book has a solution for everything.

-Vijaya Karnataka, Bangalore.

The success of this (Tamil) book lies in its simple flair, dividing the chapters, analysing the problems and suggesting solutions, and more than everything the author's unique style. *-Kumudam, Chennai*

Also by the author:

- *The Art of Studying*
- *Nurturing intelligence*
- *Secrets of Success*
  (What parents don't know, Teachers never tell)

The 5 Steps to Success

YANDAMOORI VEERENDRANATH

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RAM GOPAL VARMA

Navasahithi
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I wrote, was not happy and again re-wrote. Then somebody said it's not up to the mark. I wrote for the 7th time. Many people helped me in this endeavour patiently. I wish to thank Putalpattu Muni Prasad, Vasa Sreesaila Murty and T. Rajendra kumar ACMA for their tireless work on this project.

Thanks to Sandhya Erotu, G. Nandini, Devaneni Madhusudan Rao, Sudheera Spootry, Roomy, V. Malathi and Dr. Geeta Challa.

The secret of *creativity* is to hide the secret of its 'source'. But I am grateful to all the anonymous authors for their valuable quotes and impressive short stories on the Internet, which I incorporated in this book. I noted them with an asterisk (*) mark. Other quotes and experiences are my own.

I dedicate this work to Desiraju Hanumnatha Rao, who trained me in various theatre styles like Naturalism, Realistic, Mime and Expressionism, taught me the difference between Drama and Melodrama (the latter helped me to pen for movies) and took the pains of correcting and re-writing my scripts. But for him I would not have been 'this' Yandamoori.

Lastly, but most importantly, I thank Ram Gopal Varma, my friend (I am not sure whether he would accept this expression), for his sincere and thought-provoking foreword.

I thank the advertisers, who were kind enough to accept the printed books equal to the value of the ad-tariff they paid, and distribute those books to poor students *free of cost*.

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WHY VEERENDRANATH

"The pursuit of truth is not important… the pursuit of that truth is important which helps you in reaching your goal *provided you have one*" said Ayn Rand in her book `THE ROMANTIC MANIFESTO`.

Most people I know are not really about them having or… not having ability; but their failure lies in their absolute non clarity about what really their goal is..! There are very few I met in the course of my life who understand the difference between wishful thinking and wilful doing..!

Wishful thinking makes you dream, delude and generally meander all over your mind space, whereas a wilful doing makes you go in pursuit of a chosen goal in your life. You will come to know whether it is wrong or right direction later, but at least you will become richer in the knowledge of what direction *not to take*..! Wilful 'doers' will always be far better off, than wishful thinkers, who will mostly and permanently remain at their start point for their entire lives.

The day I took a decision to get in pursuit of a goal of somehow to become a film director, the *first person* I wanted to meet was Y. Veerendranath... that was with a good reason because he was fresh from his phenomenally successful novel 'Tulasidalam'.

I, being an avid reader of English fiction, was struck by the poetically visceral descriptions of both the visual and emotional landscapes in that path-breaking novel of Veerendranath. To cut a long story short, I managed to meet him.

And I remember it till today of me talking to him long into the night on his terrace… I was trying my best to impress him and to my frustration he was not getting impressed… perhaps partly a reason for this could have been my highly unwanted arrogant stance I used to have during those days… (it's another matter that these days I am even more arrogant…) anyway jokes apart after that first meeting that night, and then over the years I bumped into him on and off many times and had many intellectually stimulating conversations..!

He is the kind of a man who will come across as a scary person to arrogant, selfish, *know it all* people like me because the intellectually insightful stare he directs at us, will make us feel naked under the clothes of our delusional overconfidence.

But if you lean back and let him undress you, then you will realize that what he is actually doing is that he is just making you wear a new set of clothes which gives you an ability to develop a stronger outer confidence and an innate inner confidence, and which also is more importantly very real and very tangible.

And that's what this book is about which you are about to read.

At the outset I must confess that I am not into self-help and personality development kind of books as I always for some reason assumed that they never help or develop anybody..!

But then when I keep meeting people from various walks of life and when I hear them talk about how Veerendranath books have changed their lives, I have no choice but to both physically and mentally shut up and realize that my this rule-book was also wrong along with so many other assumptions of mine..!

Another confession I have to make here under the influence of reading this book is that I have a bad habit of expressing myself without bothering about communicating the same and that's also one of the reasons why many of my films don't work..!

But in Veerendranath's case, it's with what passion and with what intensity that he intends to communicate is what which both and exemplifies his expressive abilities… and it is that incredible ability of his, which I and many connect to, and which comes across so vividly and searchingly in this book.

So…

Like I proclaimed somewhere in here that I am not into this kind of books and then if I am asked why I read and why I fore-worded and why Veerendranath, my answer is… Y Veerendranath.

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PRELUDE

A Few decades ago when a Bollywood film 'Bobby' was released, the euphoric young audience danced with raptures to its exotic song "*Hum tum ek kamre me bandh ho… aur chaabi kho jaaye*" (Let the key of the room be lost, with both of us locked inside.)

They are all grown up now, but some of them may still be locked up in a room, not with their dream partner but with a 'problem'. This book intends to discover the key (solution).

…

I am neither a psycho-analyst nor a psychiatrist, but being a former bank executive and someone associated with the film industry, I have had the opportunity to interact with a number of people from various walks of life, varied attitudes and diverse problems. These unique experiences inspired me to pen a book in my vernacular.

The book was an instantant success with sales surpassing more than twenty million Rupees in a short span of two years, an all-time record in Telugu literature. Also, the response to other South Indian versions (Tamil and Kannada) was incredible.

I believe that the success lies in its originality. This book revolves around my own experiences and practical observations. Though this English version is not a literal translation, I have tried to incorporate the essense of the original version.

Right through my adolescence, I endured many phobias and weaknesses, name some… stage fear, inferiority complex, anger, frustration, lack of concentration and unwarranted excessive talking. Though some of them still persist, I can say that I have overcome most of these fears and vanquished unfruitful habits to a great extent, thanks to the great works of Adi Sankaracharya, Stephen Covey, Van Dyer and above all to the Bhagavad-Gita.

These works had introduced me to various techniques to combat my fears and flaws. I started believing the unquestionable truth that books definitely help people towards betterment.

A magazine contested its readers to define 'a good friend'. The definitions included, "a person who escalates your quality of pleasures and reduces quantity of sorrows… someone with whom you could sit for hours *in silence* and while parting both of you feel that you have never had such a beautiful conversation".

No doubt all these are great definitions, but the one winning the prize was, "*The person who stays with you when the entire world leaves you*".

Good, but impossible to get such a friend.

I feel 'books' fit this definition.

A good book stays by our side in distress, helps analyse our problems, enhances logical thinking and pulls us out of depression.

Books are the combination of an author's experience (Anubhav) and wisdom (Jnana). We know the old saying, 'God cannot be everywhere and hence created mothers.' I would say 'God cannot teach wisdom to each individual and hence created books.'

With this belief, I developed two habits: One: Reading… instead of gossiping. Two: Writing… instead of chatting.

Can a book transform someone? 'Yes' and 'no' ..!

No. Because we take the convenient path. Just by reading a book on moral values, a corrupt person does not cease to accept bribes. Had that been the case, fraudulent and unethical individuals reading the Bible, the Quran and the Bhagavad-Gita would have already been transformed.

Yes. Because it surely generates a thought, however small it might be.

A lesson from my seventh standard, '**My experiments with truth**' by Mahatma Gandhi had influenced me. Gandhi mentioned that he attended to himself often for a haircut. Saving a couple of bucks was vital to me during those days. So I excluded hairdressing from the list of expenses. I never stepped into a haircut saloon for the past 45 years, except for a couple of occasions.

After coming across an article in a science magazine that monkeys don't get bald, I stopped applying hair oil for the past 30 years. Looks funny! But who said books do not influence? After reading Covey's "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective people" I could successfully control my anger. Inspired by the Bhagavad-Gita, I established Saraswathi Ashram for tribal students.

You will find many such illustrations in this book and I humbly submit to you that these examples are not to boast, but only to share my experiences.

Being a banker, novelist and playwright, I was hesitant initially to write a book on personality development. But a couple of incidents prompted me to do this.

When I was in a party, talking of few business executives, a person wanted to talk to me personally. I was surprised but, okeyed. As we sat seperately, he started to narrate.

I was contemplating to commit suicide with nothing left after a business debacle. I came across a book that rekindled my hopes. I went to Bombay (now Mumbai) to sign a tiny contract for supply of tuna fish. On return, I was left with very little money and had to skip my dinner, but another jolt came in shape of increase in railway fare by fifteen rupees.

I was shattered but recalled the book and about the need to hold the emotional balance in crisis.

I saw a lady struggling to board the train with massive luggage. I helped her and without hesitation charged forty rupees which bailed me out that night. Later my efforts materialised and could clear my debts. The lady luck continued to smile and I could even fulfil my two long cherished desires of staying at the 'most expensive hotel' in the world and travelling in the fastest Concord plane.

At the end he concluded, "…the book I read on that night when I was to commit suicide was your **"Dabbu to the power of Dabbu (Money to the power of Money)".**

His words inspired me to pen my first non-fiction work on personality development, but I was still uncertain. Particularly with my English..!

I am not very good at it. Prolific readers of English literature won't find this book up to their standard. They may not be happy with the style at least. But this book is not for them. This is for the average Indian youth, who want to come up in life and are in search of ways of happiness. This was the positive side of my thinking. But I was still uncertain to start.

There was another incident that erased all elements of doubt.

A reputed school of fine arts felicitated me along with Dr. Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna, Akbar Padamsee (theatre), Bhanumathi Ramakrishna (celluloid), A.S.Raman (critic), and Lakshman (dancer). I was amazed as to what a pulp fiction writer like me was doing on a dias with eminent personalities like them. I shared my astonishment with the school chairperson.

"What pulp you are talking about?" she said, "When this school project was established, I was almost down and out. It was a time when my father was neither in power nor in politics. I wanted to give up the venture. That was precisely when I read your book "ANANDOBRAMHA" wherein I came across an inspirational sentence, 'When everything fails, you can still start life from Zero-Base'. The word '*zero-base*' struck me intensely. I continued the mission. That's why you are here".

The compliment was a bigger honour than the felicitation on the dais. The lady was Mrs. Vani, daughter of great scholar and former Prime Minister of India, Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao.

This erased all my doubts. The words of Toni Morrison haunted me. "If there is a book you really want to read but hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

And so, I set off.

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31.03.13

FIRST STEP:

WHEN GOD WISHES
SOMETHING GOOD TO THE MANKIND
HE NEVER DOES IT ON HIS OWN...!
CREATES A NEWTON, AN EINSTEIN,
A GANDHI OR A HELEN KELLER TO ACCOMPLISH THE JOB.
KNOW THE PURPOSE YOU ARE BORN FOR.

'God creates a cobweb of miseries around people to test their faith' is a timeworn excerpt from old movies. If you believe that you are in problems because of your honesty, you are deceiving yourself.

'God helps the *good* overcome difficulties' is yet another fallacy. If you believe God, you should also believe that god cannot make millions of life-jackets and so designed a technique called 'swimming'! If life is a stream, enjoying every moment of swimming is 'SUCCESS'.

Life is a book:

If your life is a book, its story line should be 'happiness'. Don't dump it in a junkyard called *lethargy* to be decomposed by *apathy* and besieged by cobwebs of *laziness.*

Love your book. If you don't like it, others don't even like to glance at it. Read your book every day for positive corrections and betterment. It is called *self-analysis*. Keep the pages clean for improvement, taking a cue from past experiences and encounters. There are no better lessons than experiences to learn from.

Great people learn through other's experience, the average through their own experience and of course, the stupid never learn either from others or their own mistakes.

The preface of your book should be *Romanticism* and the epilogue *spirituality.* Loosing zeal is the biggest defeat in life. Add drama and thrill. Even a tiny thrill should stimulate you. Go on exploring new ideas to make life more interesting. Design the chapters with titles: ***EDUCATION, CAREER, FINANCE, FAMILY*** and ***SPIRITUALITY***. The book outlines your values, beliefs, ethics, humour and kindness.

Your astute '*Time and Space management'* techniques are the neatly synchronised page make-ups. The multi-coloured cover page of the book is how you present yourself, in other sense your *external makeup*. Colour the cover page with your 'smile'. Now it is the time to name it.

Let the title be: **"THE MAKING OF MYSELF"**

Now the book is ready for sale. How do you market it? Marketing is beauty of your relationships. It sells only when you develop contacts with the help of your brand name. Your brand is your Personality.

A personality is the combination of *internal* and *external* personae. Your physique, smile, body language, dress and manners constitute your external personality. Then what is internal personality?

The concept of Satagopam:

In my motivational classes, I ask students to raise hands those who intend to come up in life. Almost everybody does it. Then I ask, 'what is coming up in life?' even many elders are also not able to answer.

Coming up in life is 'Developing your personality'..! Various philosophers professed different theories to define a personality. *I found the ultimate definition in the blessings at our Indian temples.* The priests of South Indian temples bless us with a crown called Satagopam, derived from the original word *Shatgopyam*. 'Shat' denotes six, 'Gopyam' means secrets. In fact the priests place the crown on our head twice, first to remove our six weaknesses which devour our success:

kama (lust),
Krodha (anger),
Mada (pride),
Matsarya (jealousy),
Lobha (greed) and
Moha (delusion).

If the first blessing is to remove six evils (*Shadvidha Daaridriya)*, the second is to bless us with six riches (*Shadguna Aiswarya):*

1. Health (physical, mental and spiritual health)
2. Love (with parents, spouse, children and universe),
3. Fame (social status),
4. Wealth (secured and comfortable life),
5. Wisdom (intelligence, knowledge and emotional balance) and
6. Enthusiasm (happiness, healthy vices and thrills)

Ultimately it is about losing weaknesses and acquiring strengths resulting in eternal bliss. Can there be any better definition for 'personality'?

The next question is how to develop a good personality?

Self-awareness:

A host gave a torch to his visually handicapped friend while sending him off after the dinner. "What shall I do with this, I can't see anyway?" he murmured.

His friend said, "You may not be, but it helps the opposite person to notice you".

A cyclist hit him while he was walking home. He yelled "Can't you see the light? I am blind".

The confused cyclist said, "I am sorry sir, but you did not switch-on the torch..."

Switching on the light within is *self-awareness.* To reach the Peak of Success, you have to climb thousand steps. The first two steps are self-awareness and transformation. Remaining 998 steps are not that significant.

Awareness means realising own weaknesses. But mere accepting a weakness and defending it saying 'I talk nonsense in anger… I cannot restrain myself while losing in playing cards… I fail to concentrate due to nervousness…' does not solve problem.

It is like an insurance agent suggesting an Item-song dancer 'save your beauty for tomorrow'.

The second step is transformation. A famous Buddhist Monk, Lama Yeshe, known for his superb treatment for anxiety says:

"Emotional distress and anxiety are trivial troubles like the small waves on the surface of a huge ocean. The real volcanoes are underneath. We focus on apparent problems while ignoring the actual cause. It is like searching for the missing article where the light is, rather than where it is lost. My way of treating mental illness is to have the person analyse the nature of his problem. I cannot solve his problems by talking to him even for hours. I give him a little advice. On receiving it if he says, 'Oh, great, my problem's gone; Lama solved it with just a few words..!' that's a fabrication. There's no way one can solve your mental problems without you becoming your own psychologist. First understand them and then start the battle..."

LIFE IS A WAR

FROM BODY OUT OF THE WOMB
TO SOUL OUT OF THE BODY ... LIFE IS A WAR.

'THE ART OF WAR' written two thousand years ago by a high-ranking military general and strategist called Sun Tzu is considered to be one of the Seven Military Classics of China. The author says five factors are to be considered before waging a war: 1. Weaknesses of our army 2. Strength of the opponent 3. Effect of war on relationships with other countries 4. Cost of the battle 5. The purpose of war.

Life is also a war, a bloodless battle, where the enemy is either our *own Problem* or a *Weakness*. The above five principles of war apply to life-struggle as well:

1. Winning over weaknesses and problems.

2. Developing strengths.

3. Maintaining human relations.

4. Acquiring wealth and fame.

5. Understanding the ultimate purpose of life.

These five are the chapters of this book..! The art of war comprises a handful of strategies. Suppose your army is sensitive to cold weather, don't plan the encounter in winter (This is the reason Hitler's army got defeated in Russia). If your army is not good in swimming, don't plan the battle near the river. If your opponent is not good in trekking, force him onto the mountains. If his army consists of more elephants, invite him to muddy soil.

The same strategy is to be applied to different problems like relationship crisis, financial catastrophes and unexpected disasters. Each problem is to be handled with a different approach… money, influence, strong will, brutality, determination and even with a compromise. On few occasions, we ought to accept *temporary* defeat for a *long-lasting* triumph. *Wisdom is the discretion when to bow and where to be stubborn, when to accept defeat and where to fight.*

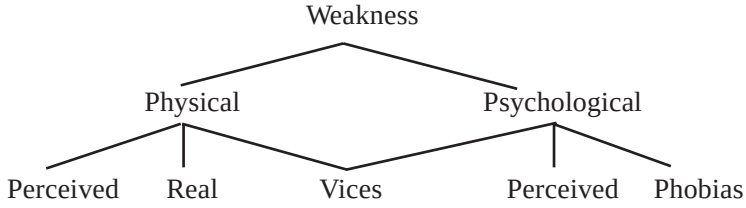
Real and perceived problem /weaknesses*:*

As a writer, many of my films were box office hits. But I flopped as a director. People stopped inviting me for functions and parties when both of my directorial ventures failed. I realised that success has many fathers but failure is an orphan.

When you are on a success spree, people run after you to shake hands even with your shadow, but in the darkness of failure your shadow also disappears. But be confident that failure in one field is not the end of the road. I reverted back to my Chartered Accountancy profession and also took up the job of motivating people, particularly tribal students.

Weaknesses can be either *physical* or *psychological.* They can also be real or perceived. Schizophrenia and Amnesia are real psychological diseases, whereas tension and anxiety are perceived. Blood pressure, migraine, rheumatic pains are real physical weaknesses whereas lethargy and laziness are perceived.

There are two other categories: phobias and vices. Unreasonable fears are called *phobias;* and unreasonable desires are *vices*. Fear of water, cockroaches and thunders are phobias. Cravings like alcohol and gambling are called vices.



We can do nothing about *real* physical limitations like Cancer or psychiatrically incurable Narcissistic Personality Disorders. This chapter deals only with *perceived* weaknesses which can be fought upon with effort and determination.

Weakness is like a fly in the car. We roll down the glass to let it leave; but not knowing the exact way-out, it tries to go out through the closed window, hitting the glass panel again and again.

We for sure are better than the insects.

War tactics:

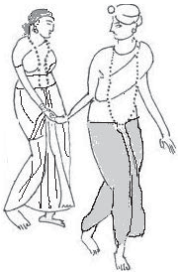
Problems are inevitable. If food, shelter and every other comfort is available at your doorstep and you are asked to just eat and sleep, you would become insane soon. So the bottom line is*: The beauty of life is proportionate to the battles we win.*

Never think that you have no enemies to fight with. A clerk has to compete with his co-clerk for promotion, a housewife at a municipal tap and a business tycoon with his competitor. Even to force an entry into a city-bus we have to fight. Where there is a problem, there is a fight.

Even Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Jesus had bigger problems and enemies… more powerful than yours.

Hence learn to fight, without losing your smile. Smile is the second best thing that lips can do! Laughing faces do not mean that there is no sorrow. It means that they have the ability to deal with it. Then why do some people hardly smile? Those with ill health, who have hostile relationships with themselves or their family, people in financial crisis, disgusted with their job and bored with their daily routine find it difficult to smile. You rarely see a bus conductor, corporate college lecturer, railway enquiry clerk smiling.

You are destined to deal with people and situations with four weapons: Intimacy, diplomacy, gentleness and aggression. Choosing the suitable weapon for each crisis is called *wisdom*.



Let us apply in good humour Sun Tzu's war tactics to a newlywed girl stepping into her in-law's house. Everything appears normal on the surface, but she has to quickly realise who are diplomatic, dominating and egoistic. Presuming that there are two factions in that tiny palace, she may inevitably have to be on one side, without inviting the wrath of the other group. She must be careful with people who talk sweet but carry the words. Her co-sister would be ready to burden her with work to liberate her own self.

My intention is not to project the gloomy side of joint families, but to explain the significance of *the Art of War* at every walk of life.

With this back ground let us play the winning game.

ANGER

ANGER IS
AWAKENING THE MONSTER IN YOU.

A father spanks his son while signing the progress report and warns him to study well. However, there is hardly any link among the three: His fears, punishment and his belief that punishment is the ultimate.

He convinces himself that by injecting fear, he is moulding his son. Some people may even agree with this..! But to get good marks the five-year-old boy should put-in more efforts. This is possible only when the father spends some time to cultivate interest in studies, which is otherwise called *good parenting*. Having no time (!) the father had taken an easy solution… punishing..!

Anger is retaliation through an uncomfortable emotion with three temperaments: cognitive (agitated) somatic-affective (tension) and interactive (withdrawal, resentment and hatred).

Irrational behaviours in anger:

Reaction in rage depends on mental makeup. In a family quarrel, an introvert wife walks out of the scene, an adamant wife declines food, a furious husband slaps and a psycho may even kill.

Anger is to tell others that we are not happy with them. But do we really need to adopt such diabolical methods?

An ex M.L.A promised a voter that he would stop by his house for a cup of tea en-route while canvassing. The thrilled host asked his people to cleanse the house. As the guest was arriving, his son spilled ink while dusting. The exasperated host slapped him and rushed out with a broad smile to invite the guest. He asked his wife to bring tea. In the chaos she forgot adding sugar. The guest took it lightly, but the host scolded her in the presence of all to the extent that she was in tears. He continued his admonishment even after the departure of the guest.

For appreciation from a temporary guest, the host lost the cologne of the relationship with his permanent family members. To be honest, *we keep our face tidy, but soul in a mess.*

The suitcase theory:

Anger is of two types: Momentary, that is articulated for temporary reasons; Perpetual that develops when two persons hating each other have to stay together (spouse, member in a joint family, partner in business, co-producer of a film). One day the suppressed rage erupts like a volcano. They fume out their long fermented anger, dig the past events and blame each other before winding up the relation.

Momentary anger is a coercive reaction to other person's action. Parents, spouse, teachers and employers have such a power to coerce others. But when we cannot vent out our anger in situations where the other person is superior to us by age, power or position, we collect such garbage of frustration in a *suitcase*, carry it wherever we go and dump it on someone who obliges us. This is called 'suitcase theory'.

A manager reprimands his subordinate, "I am surprised as to how you are able to hang on here for the past 25 years. A donkey would do better than you." Unable to pay him back in the same coin, the feeble clerk goes home carrying the donkey in his suitcase.

His wife serves him tea, forgetting to add sugar. Normally he would react in a passive voice, "Darling, you have been preparing excellent tea for 25 years. How is that you forgot sugar? Will you… No…No… You appear to be tired. I will get it for myself".

Such a nice man opens the suitcase now. Same words in a different tone: "Caaaan't you make tea properly after 25 years of experience? I would have been happier marrying a donkey." The wife wants to snap, "Even I feel the same" but cannot. Releasing the suitcase, he goes to front room and escapes into a newspaper.

Now the donkey is with her.

Meanwhile her son comes home, late from the school. He says that he was looking at the wall-posters of a new release. Even before he completes, she slaps him relieving the suitcase.

The irritated boy releases the suit case onto the nearby dog by kicking it. Dogs don't carry suitcases but prefer immediate action. It sprints to the front room and bites the clerk. Anger thus boomerangs spoiling the flavour of love and affection.

How to control anger:

A philosopher says, "All our negative emotions are our wounds that we carry. We should let it be healed. Anger is like an itch, rubbing giver temperory relief only. Nobody is interested in hurting us; they are engaged in safeguarding their own wounds."

"Just look back into your past and you will remember a few things. You were a small child and the teacher called you an idiot, your father said something and you feel resentment. Your teacher and parents have forgotten and you still remember it. Your wound is still fresh and paining." The philosopher's words appear to be true to the core.

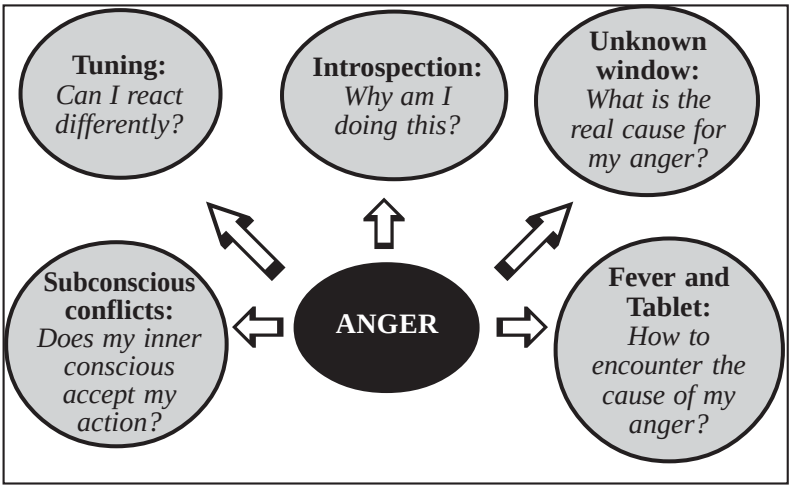
"Try it. Just for twenty four hours… total acceptance, whatsoever happens. Someone insults you, accept it. Don't think about getting your revenge. If someone pushes you and you fall to the ground — fall! Then get up and go home. Don't react and see what happens."

"Suddenly you will feel energy, a new vitality arising from the roots… flowing in you that you have not felt before. People can waste their whole life over a small thing, just because someone insulted them. Don't do anything about it, just for twenty-four hours. Once you have tasted it, your life will be different. Then you will laugh at all the foolish things you have been doing, at all the resentments, reactions, revenges with which you have been destroying yourself."

"Nobody else can destroy you except you; nobody else can save you except you. You are the Judas and you are the Jesus."

Suppression of emotion leads to blood pressure. On the other hand excessive anger ropes in heart attacks. 'Expressing anger' is different from being angry. Sometimes we may have to express anger to get the work done. But improper expression harms the relationship. Here are five steps to control anger or to express it in a better way.

1. Why
2. Is it anger or frustration ?
3. Am I fuming frequently ?
4. Can I react differently ?
5. What to do for never-ever to be unnecessarily angry ?



1. INTROSPECTION:

Inspection means scrutinising others. Introspection means 'looking into you'. It is otherwise called Pause Button Technique. It involves holding the 'pause button' of our mental tape-recorder for a second, before the emotional outbursts.

You are walking in a lonely street and someone kicks on your back. You are shocked. A fellow is smiling from behind. You don't' hit him being cultured, but furiously ask why he has done this.

He coolly replies, "When donkeys are to be tamed, they are to be kicked. You look like a donkey and hence I kicked."

Tightening your fist, you ask irately, "Do I look like a donkey?" He comes closer, studies your face intimately and apologises, "Sorry, you don't look like a donkey" and waits for a second to confirm, "You look like a monkey."

When a person loses his emotional balance, starts using filthy language, breaks cell phones/spectacles. It is called 'Cut-off point'. You boil down to that point and slap him. You hit him so hard that your finger-ring strikes his eye and it starts bleeding.

You are shocked. Meanwhile you notice two volunteers rushing towards you to inform that the person is paranoid. Now you notice the MENTAL HOSPITAL board. You look at him with guilt. He raises his hand to bless you with an innocent smile while being taken away by the compounders. His shirt is soaking with blood.

Which emotion substituted your anger now? Compassion..! How much time does it take? Hardly one second..! Had you controlled your emotions for one more second, the scenario would have been different.

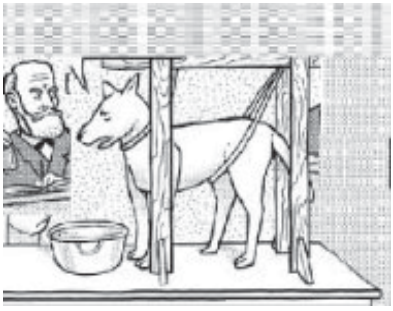
That is pause button technique.

Anger releases the trigger and the word smears opposite person's heart like a bullet. In the above example, there is a possibility that the eye ball could be adjusted with a surgery, but the scar in the heart by an irate word can never be erased.

An old man required a few lakh rupees for operation. His son failed trying every source. Suddenly he recalled his father lending money to a person, but unable to recover. He went to him, "I want our money back. I will kill you if you pay by tomorrow. I love my father so much that if you don't come, I will come to your house, kill your family members and go to gallows gladly".

The borrower came next day morning. Holding the pistol "Did you bring the cash?" the boy asked. "No. but…" before his words were finished, the boy shot him dead. While dying the borrower completed last words, "… I brought a bank draft."

2. TUNING:



Pavlov, a scientist trained a dog by placing a piece of mutton in front of it and rang a bell while it was eating. After few days, the dog salivated on hearing the bell. He proved that the conditioned response is often different from the unconditioned response. For his ground breaking work on reflexes, he was awarded Nobel Prize in 1904.

We weep in *anguish*, sweat in *tension*, shiver in *fear*, fume in *anger* and feel *shy* when naked. But these reflexes surely can be altered. With a small practice we can *grin* in a situation where we are accustomed to fume.

It is like *fearing* the bungee jump initially and *enjoying* it later. Whether you smile watching mediocre tragedy film or weep witnessing a stupid comedy … is your form of 'tuning your brain'.

Initially it appears impossible to 'tune' our reactions, but with my experience I can tell you that I could control my anger to a great extent, by the 'Pause button technique'.

A lady weeps beating her chest on the demise of her husband, while the man just sobs. A daily wage earner cannot weep for days together on the demise of her husband but should recover quickly and take up the responsibility of the family. Affection being the same, why is the difference? It is the tuning, built upon our beliefs, customs, traditions and even gender as well.

A girl was sitting by the side of her mother-in-law's dead body, surrounded by sobbing relatives. She was not crying as the old lady horrendously harassed her till her last breath. In fact the girl wanted to dance in ecstasy. Noticing her jubilation, what would her mother suggest?

Now suppose the son-in-law is weeping by the body of his deceased 'young widowed' mother-in-law, beating his chest. How does his mother react and gesticulate? ☺

Effect of tuning: In European countries people don't cry loudly near the corpse. In few African cultures relatives of the dead dance with ecstasy on the demise of a person. They believe that soul rests in peace if they are happy. In some other traditions, grief for the dead is forbidden as it denotes selfishness. They believe that 'Death' is a reunion of souls at some other place.

3. CONSCIOUS AND SUB-CONSCIOUS CONFLICTS:

People with unhealthy lifestyles are more susceptible to anger. Between two students, suppose one is at the receiving end both at home and school; and the second is complimented for being good in studies or at sports. Who is happier? The former *may appear* to be happy but his subconscious mind pricks. He may later become more rebellious and hot-tempered or cynical. Self-centred people like drunkards and gamblers and people with regular Id and super ego conflicts are easily prone to irritation. Here is an example.

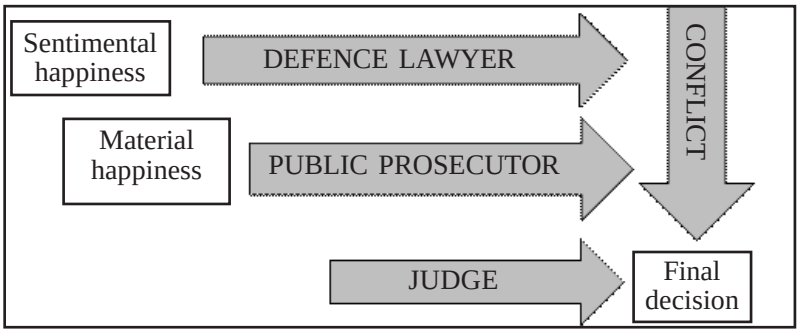
> *An employee promises his newly married wife to come home early to take her to the temple, movie and later to dinner. At his office his friend invites him to a cocktail party to celebrate his promotion. Adding to his 'catch – 22' situation, his officer asks him to stay back and complete an important task. Now the clerk has to decide among the three: Family; Friends and Promotion.*

If the clerk feels distressed for missing the party, he would not enjoy the movie and his wife's company. Or if he curses himself having missed his wife and does a mistake, while working late in the office, he may face a reversion. On the other hand, if he worries about the consequences with his boss when he is partying with friends he belongs to the category of those people who never enjoy their drink and spoil other's mood pouring out their agonies after two pegs.

You should have 3 jurisprudent individuals within you, a *defence* lawyer to support sentimental happiness (life is not just getting a promotion; go out with newlywed wife); a *prosecutor* for the material benefits (work in the office); and the unbiased *judge* to give the final verdict. After the decision, ignore the other attractive alternatives.

But not easy..! The burger appears tempting after ordering a pizza. All other saris appear more attractive after purchasing a sari.

If you are a go-go type, you often pay attention to your defence lawyer. You prefer to enjoy the present, unmindful of future. On the other hand, if the prosecutor in you is strong, you never enjoy the 'present'. You perform your duties as an obligation and always look for future. You never realise that *'aiming for better future'* does not mean '*unsatisfactory present'*.



You would never repent for your decisions, if the judge in you is strong. A successful judge has the following qualities: 1. He distinguishes priorities with wisdom than self-centeredness. 2. The more he learns he discovers that there is still more to learn. 3. He prepares for unexpected eventualities (for example : getting prepared with alternate arrangements when a marriage is planned in rainy season in the open).

4. UNKNOWN WINDOWS:

Sometimes the reason for irritation may not appear outwardly like fear against cockroach, aversion towards a dish etc. An eight-year-old girl may develop phobia towards crowds if her mother frequently warns her not to play outside. A child may become either a rebel or an introvert with recurrent criticism by parents.

When my teacher was explaining $2H_2 + O_2 = 2H_2O$, I asked "Sir, why can't it be $H_2 + O = H_2O$?" He chided "Stupid! You will never understand chemistry". Since then chemistry had been a nightmare. Subsequently, while working on two novels PRARDHANA (Prayer) based on biochemistry and CHEEKATLO SURYUDU (The sun in the darkness) on astronomy, I read Asimov and Arthur Clark. I realised the beauty of chemistry. My unknown dark window opened.

Do you know? Psychologists say that our reserves of energy are stored layer upon separate layer. The fatigue gets worse up to a certain point, and if we surpass the stratum once, we are fresher than before. In other words, it is called 'second wind'.

5. FEVER – TABLET:

Of late are you fuming for simple reasons? Getting exasperated frequently? The reasons may be somewhere else but not with the situation or person. Check the real cause. It may be financial problems, ill-health, severed relations at home or at work place.

A kid accidentally falls from a staircase and gets hurt. The worried mother scolds him for his hyperactivity instead of sympathising. Her worry is genuine but expression is wrong.

Facts are always real, but feelings could be illogical. You speed-up your vehicle to cross the signal before the red light is on. But the car in front of you slows down on Yellow signal. You are about to hit it, but somehow managed to stop. Instead of appreciating the other driver's civic sense, you curse him. Not because he stopped the car, but for curtailing your 'feel of achievement'.

A well-cultured young executive stayed with his widowed mother. His colleague told the old lady about the retrenchment of executives in their office. She noticed her son getting restless and aggressive even for small reasons. One day there were heated arguments. She tried to console him about his job. Suddenly the boy was amused, because the reason was something else.

A girl at his office fascinated him. He didn't believe in dating. He respectfully wanted to ask "Will you join me for lunch? I like you. If you say okay, my mother would come to talk to your elders."

When he rang up and started saying, "Will you come for lunch…" she said rudely, "Sorry, I will talk later" and hung the phone. She did not call him again.

The boy was upset with her discourteous behaviour. He thought 'she would have courteously told me if not interested. After all it's for lunch and not a late night dinner.' He was sensitive and felt humiliated. It is the reason for his outbursts.

This is called 'FEVER'. His mother, who misunderstood his reason for anger hitherto, realised the Fact that his Emotion, that is Ventilated through anger, Endangered their Relationship.

The antidote for fever is 'TABLET'. The old lady insisted upon settling the matter immediately. (Trace all the facts). She convinced her reluctant son to call to the girl's office (Access). The girl was absent since long. They enquired further (Browse) and were told that she was in hospital (Locate). The mother insisted on talking to the girl immediately (Encounter the problem). They went to the hospital (Terminate).

The girl was pleasantly surprised to see them. She narrated what happened on the fateful day. When he rang up, she could sense his proposal. She was on cloud nine and was about to say 'yes'. Meanwhile her boss called her in. She had to disconnect the phone saying, 'Sorry I will talk later'. He misunderstood her jubilation as hostility. While going to her boss, the elated girl flew like a bird, slipped on the steps and ended up with a fracture.

Anger - a natural instinct:

Even Gods are not anger- proof. Lord Shiva is the symbol of fury and when furious imprecates whoever in front of him. Even Vishnu lost his emotional balance and rushed in a hurry to save the elephant from the clutches of a crocodile, forgetting his weaponry, the chakra etc. *(sirikin cheppadu… sanku chakra yugamun chedoyi sandhimpadu).*

We are bound to lose the emotional balance some times with all our high E.Q. levels. But age and experience should teach us how to rectify our behaviour.

On long persuasion, a widowed mother reluctantly accepted her sixteen year only daughter to spend a night at her friend's house on the eve of her birth day. The girl promised that she would ring up immediately on reaching there, but did not as was absorbed in the celebrations.

The mother was tensed. She tried to call on her daughter but nobody was lifting the phone. As time passed she was on the verge of breaking down. At 1'clock in the night the phone bell rang. She ferociously lifted the receiver and yelled, "You promised to ring up, but didn't care to call till now… Do you think your mother died?"

"Is this the government hospital madam?" an innocent voice of a twelve year old boy enquired from the other side. It triggered her fury further. She kept off the phone with a cracking sound.

It rang again. She lifted it with a ray of hope. "Is it government hospital?" same voice quarried. Losing her control she screamed, "Nooo... How many times do you want me to tell you?"

The childish voice from the other side said "You didn't tell it madam."

She felt guilty but that lead to more irritation. "Okay. Now I am telling you. This is not" squawking curtly she was about to put off. Then she heard his choking voice from the other side, "I have to inform my father waiting at the hospital that I am not getting my mother's blood group anywhere here… how?"

She felt a powerful wave of cold air hitting her face. A feeling of shame engulfed her. Pulling the telephone directory towards her, she said passively, "Wait a minute babu… I will tell the number."

Whose mistake is it anyway?

While concluding the chapter on 'anger', here is a small therapy. When you are out of control with rage, hold a paper weight or the edge of the table tightly, grip it forcefully for a minute and release it. Then rub it gently and slowly. It gives a soothing and friendly feeling.

And lastly but most importantly, listen to the other person's version. Let the opposite person know the reasons for your fury. Always consider that the mistake is with you before you raise your finger.

A person claimed that his wife was not able to listen properly. The doctor asked him either to bring her for check-up or to find out the severity of the problem himself. He said okay and went home. Standing at a distance near the kitchen door he asked, "Dear, what are you cooking?"

The wife was facing the wall and did not reply. He went nearer and repeated the question. There was no answer. His blood pressure was rising. He went by her side and yelled, "What… whaaat are you cooking for lunch?"

Turned towards him she said flaccidly, "I told you thrice. I'm frying brinjals."

LAZINESS

LAZINESS IS SO SLOW THAT
SOON FAILURE ENGULFS IT.

Students claim laziness as their third problem, the first two being lack of concentration and fear of public speaking. But what is laziness?

A person complained that off late he is not able to work on anything. After investigation the doctor said, "Well… you do not have any complications. You just became lazy." The patient hesitantly asked, "That's fine doctor, but tell me a medical term to convince my wife."

You may cackle but laziness has no definition either in psychiatry or medical dictionaries. It is just *prioritising preferences*. A student, who gets up at an odd hour to watch a cricket match being held at Australia, feels lazy to wake up early and study.

Up to 7th year kids are not lazy. They become lazy by their teenage if they are not trained to do their own household tasks.

Laziness spreads like a virus on your time-nerve. Lazy people always look for bodily comforts and are relaxed without work. They develop a careless attitude. A mistake was already made. Not knowing where it was committed, now the final feeling is '…to hell with it!' It is like a hefty man claiming, 'I can't help. It's fate' and a student saying, 'Lack of memory is in our genes.'

Don't confuse laziness with 'Idleness'. While working in a rush hour, suddenly everything seems to be blank. You require a short break for being yourself. Idleness is the *work-gap* to recoup and energise again, whereas laziness is building a lousy world around you.

You go to a late night movie leaving the untidy dinner plates. On return you feel tired and go to sleep. You wake up late the next day and hurry to office. When you return in the evening, the house is stinking and honestly speaking you want to clean, but the body refuses to oblige. You order food from outside. Thus you are slowly getting 'accustomed to stay' with rotten smell, while not realising that you have also started stinking with laziness.

Sleep:

Children require eight hours and adults seven. Life-energy is accumulated and body gets revitalized during these seven hours; the centres of brain and heart calm down and your life functions from your navel centre. Thus sleep is the best relaxation method bestowed by nature.

Sleep passes through six phases: pleasure of resting (twenty minutes), entering into sleep (ten to sixty minutes depending on the age and exertion), rapid eyeball movement, deep-sleep (five to six hours), drowsiness (age and late night habits.) and awakening stage.

According to the MAHA BHARATHA four types of people suffer from sleeplessness: Thieves, people with powerful enemies, individuals with unfulfilled desires and those who lost everything.

If Saint Vyasa were to rewrite the epic today, he would add 'students' and 'working classes' as well. Education these days is no longer a joyful ride due to hard-hitting competition. Financial problems, stress, strained family relations and vices are the reasons for sleeplessness for adults.

Insomnia and Hypersomnia:

Lack of sleep results in drowsiness and an irritative mood. It weakens reflex actions and decision-making. Even if you are deprived of sleep for two to three days, you can balance with deep sleep the following day. Early to bed and late to rise is called *hypersomnia*. Insomnia is identified in the following cases:

1. Not being able to sleep instantly after going to bed and hence waking up late in the morning.
2. Not being able to sleep till midnight but waking up early, thus suffering from fatigue throughout the day.
3. Not being able to enter into the *deep sleep phase* at any stage in the night, leaving a drained feeling.
4. Not being able to sleep after awaking in the middle of the night.

Five hours of deep-sleep is adequate for us, but we enjoy the drowsy stage at the early hours of the day. This is the reason children don't feel like getting out of bed, despite the admonishments from their mothers.

Saturday night fever:

Parents allow children to watch TV till late hours during Saturday night, presuming that they can wake up late on Sunday. They do not realise the indirect harm they are causing to the child.

The child, who sleeps till nine on Sunday, cannot enter the *first phase* of sleep in the night, as his sleep-clock is altered. Nevertheless he has to wake up early on Monday. Thus he is deprived of important *'deep sleep'* and yawns in the classroom for next two to three days till his sleep-clock readjusts. Again Saturday is waiting at the gates.

Regular eating and sleeping at the same time is one of the best habits to control sleep disorders.

ONE DAY TWO DAWN TECHNIQUE: History says that Edison, Gandhi and Chandra Bose did not sleep for many consecutive days and yet gave out a prodigious amount of work. What is not reported in the history is that they were free to nap in between their work at various times.

Scientists, great leaders and business executives sleep for four to five hours and still are cheerful and energetic, because they go to the deep sleep immediately and don't entertain the pleasure of 'pre and post' sleep. Whenever they find time they also relish the *catnaps*.

A siesta surely keeps you energetic but don't sleep for long hours in the afternoon. Relax for few minutes during lunchtime at your office, school or institution. It rebuilds your energies. A ten-minute nap during lunch hour helps students feel fresh afterwards. It is called *one day – two dawn* technique (For more details about this technique, read **THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS:** WHAT PARENTS DON'T KNOW – TEACHERS NEVER TELL)

Do you want to cut on your laziness? Your body composition has a direct bearing on your lethargy. Next time when you go to crowded places like railway stations and exhibitions, observe people. You find more than 60% with more than 30% fat. Notice their fate while climbing the steps pulling up their huge bodies. You feel like starting exercise and limit your junk food. Implement the new resolution immediately.

Breaking insomnia and Hypersomnia:

1. Analyse the physical or psychological causes for extra-sleep or sleeplessness. Identify the stress points and ease them. Sleeping pills are useful for physical pain only. Insomnia due to mental stress *rebounds* once the effect of those pills starts subsiding.

2. 'Sleep' and 'time' are interrelated. Regularise daily schedules and sleep at the *same time* every day.

3. Stop work-related activities well before bedtime. People, accustomed to go to bed straightaway after a hectic work, say 'We sleep like log after hard work'. But they fail to understand that they are gradually adapting to the habit of getting sleep 'only after exerting with heavy workload'. *Workaholic tendencies should never become a prerequisite to sleep.*

4. Alcohol does not help in getting good sleep. *Intoxication* and *sleep* are two different things.

5. It is nice to have a long and intimate phone conversation before sleep. But you would feel miserable on a particular night when you do not find anyone to talk. This may land you up in insomnia.

6. Avoid watching news channels before sleep. News animates the mind rather than relaxing. Avoid viewing late-night shows lying on the bed.

7. A painful truth is that obesity and junk food cause hypersomnia. Cut on food and improve on exercise. Regular workout improves the quality of sleep if you are suffering from chronic insomnia.

8. If you wake up suddenly at midnight and do not get sleep again, don't stay on bed worrying. Engage in any activity. You are unable to sleep because the worry for sleeplessness is making you feeble.

9. Use eye-masks or earplugs if you are allergic to light or sound.

10. Cut down smoking and caffeine. They increase the 'eyeball moment phase' without letting you to enter the *deep sleep* stage.

11. Keep the bedroom cosy with pleasing white or blue colours and good ventilation. Spray mild perfume and play music before sleep. Once the cortex part of the brain is tuned to such fragrance or music, it soothes you to sleep.

12. Reading a book or listening to *pre-recorded lessons* before sleep is an excellent habit, particularly to students. It helps to a great extent affecting the electromagnetic waves and in turn, memory.

13. Close your eyes and breathe slowly, making each gasp deeper than the previous. Starting from toes to neck, tense the muscles as firmly as you can and then relax. Muscle relaxation technique helps to overcome insomnia.

14. Never have a large meal two hours before sleep. A bedtime snack or a glass of milk also supports you get good sleep.

15. If you could not sleep for a night due to workload or for any other reason, don't oversleep during next day *afternoon*. Engage with something interesting to maintain your regular *sleep discipline*.

16. Catnaps help people with hypersomnia whereas people with insomnia should avoid them during daytime.

Complacency:

Survey conducted on the first year students of top ten colleges, who did not fare well, showed that they did not keep up the tempo after working hard to get a seat in a prestigious college, with a feeling that they have achieved their target. It is called complacency.

There is no difference between complacent hippies and lazy teenagers. Both neither do anything nor realise that that is only the cause of their problem.

A commuter was enquiring about the availability of tickets at the railway enquiry counter.
The clerk asked "which tickets?"
The irritated passenger retorted, "Cinema tickets".
"I don't know" The clerk replied, "This counter is to give information about the arrival and departure of the trains only."

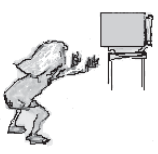
Complacency can be defined as pseudo-satisfaction with life, with (or without) the knowledge that something is *imminent* to destroy such satisfaction in future. The danger erupts in three ways:

1. Cosy: A technically competent skilled worker with paltry salary gets an offer to join as a partner in a new establishment for 'minimum guaranteed salary' plus a commendable share in profits. He may not take the risk though there is nothing to lose because even in case the business fails, he can get such a petty job anywhere. Still he prefers to continue in his present job saying that he is contended and starts inventing new reasons like "*I am doing ok...not very happy but no regrets ... just keeping hand to mouth...*" This is called cosy complacency.

2. Arrogant: A leading company loses its number one position as its competitors expand on research; introduce new improved products and spend huge amounts on advertisement. The former company believes that the *past goodwill* is sufficient to maintain its top position. It is 'arrogant complacency'. Arrogant and complacent people believe in *teaching* rather than *learning*. They are egoistic, frame their own theories and never listen to anybody.

3. Unconscious. A topper from a rural school struggles to compete with urban students at a professional college and withdraws into his shell of complacency due to fear complex. After losing his charisma, an actor takes shelter in drinks instead of engaging in another profession or in philanthropic activity. This is called 'unconscious complacency'. Many a times we don't know what *more* or what *else* can be done.

We believe that our horizons are limited**.** *Fatigue* and *boredom* are different. We get exhausted while reading not because of fatigue but due to monotony. We push away a textbook saying, 'Oh…exhausted!' and then casually pick up a magazine and read avidly for another hour. Obviously we have confused fatigue with boredom.



Bitter fact: It is 'not' when bored with studies that a student turns on the TV. It is the TV that makes him feel bored quickly.
There is nothing called **laziness.**
Doing an interesting job at the cost of a useful job, and repenting for it later… is called laziness.

Procrastination:

Procrastination is caused by apathetic and uninterested routine, and is derived from two Latin words, pro (for) and cras (tomorrow).

Successful people know three secrets: 1. Success is like mercury that slips away unless you hold it tight. 2. Staying at the top is tougher than reaching there. 3. The only reason that can pull them down from their top position is complacency. We all procrastinate occasionally, but 'chronic procrastinators' delay even important tasks with four different defence arguments:

1. Perfectionism (I do it flawlessly and hence I wait for right mood).
2. Inability (I have no energy and hence I wait).
3. Mood (I am not mentally prepared).
4. Delegation (a person of my stature is not required for this petty job).

Students who postpone studies till the last minute are called *academic* procrastinators, making excuses such as 'just waiting for right moment'. A silly reason like 'room being not tidy' is adequate for them to postpone. Here are few tips to win procrastination.

1. Stay with achievers. Watch people who succeeded in the same profession that you are contemplating and comprehend their source of inspiration.

2. Tasting success is the only way to keep laziness at bay. A first ranker tries to uphold his position having tasted the compliments from the teachers, silent admiration and 'we are proud of you' feeling of parents. He takes pleasure in being quoted every time as a role model. He also *secretly* enjoys the envious feeling of his classmates.

3. You are more refreshed by switching from one subject to another after a rest break. Write something when you are bored with reading. Shift to maths when fed up with History.

> *Earle Stanley Gardner, the mystery storywriter and creator of Perry Mason, said that he could best use his time and energy by working on three stories at one time. To surmount monotony I use different pens. I move to typing English non-fiction, when I am bored with scripting Telugu fiction by hand.*

A pleasing atmosphere reduces fatigue. We are more relaxed when our sensory organs are comfortable. Here are few tips for students.

1. Eyes: Read under a table light. Keep a 'map' in study room and explore interesting places, rivers and countries for much needed relaxation. Don't go to kitchen (though not hungry) or watch TV for a few minutes (it won't stop there). 2. Aroma: You cannot read sitting by a stinking drainage. Smell of jasmine has a sleepy effect. Smell distracts the mind. Recent research suggests that *a whiff of mint* motivate senses. With my experience I learnt that smell of an incense stick generates better study mood. The aroma in temples is the example. 3. Food: Bananas, sweets, junk food and chicken divert the oxygen from brain to digestive system triggering sleepiness while studying in the night. 4. Pray: Stand still for few minutes before starting studies. It is called 'cleaning the mind'. Try ear plugs or cotton if you feel that the outside sounds are disturbing you. Avoid music while reading. Soft single instrumental music is ok but when you grow up, your roommates may object for it. 5. Create congenial atmosphere and work with good frame of mind. When you are able to remember Amitabh and Aiswaryas, you can also recall Archimedes and Pythagoras. (For details about relaxation techniques, refer "100 tips to get a rank" at *www.yandamoori.com).*

Rare photographs of Swami Vivekananda, Amitab Bachchan, Charlie Chaplin, Subhas Chandra Bose, Aiswarya Roy and Rabindranath Tagore

Laziness is *the habit of resting before you get tired*. When people ask me for tips to overcome laziness, I ask them how they define 'laziness'. Explanations pour in "No mood to work… a feeling to postpone… the confidence that if I don't do it, some other person would do it for me…"After they vent out their definitions, I appeal them to raise their hands again, if they stand by the same interpretations even 'after' their marriage. After a few seconds lull, the auditorium vibrates with laughter. Nobody would dare to raise their hand.

FEAR

WHEN FEAR KNOCKS THE DOOR
LET YOUR FAITH OPEN IT.
YOU WILL FIND NOTHING OUTSIDE.

Fear is an unpleasant emotion, difficult to define. It is about something bad that is happening presently (sudden noise in the adjacent room at midnight) or might happen in future (a critical heart operation next week / court verdict next day).

Fear does not exist as an isomorphic source. People never saw devils but still fear them. Fear of god keeps many people live ethically. We need not have a dog bite to fear a growling dog.

Fear of sound begins at the age of second month. Fear of insecurity also starts at the same age and develops with it. Our frights include fear of schools, crowds, rats, thunders, loneliness, suffocation, mingling with strangers, anxiety over injury or pain (self or others), fear of retirement, losing financial stability, fear of being disliked, becoming laughing stock, fear of taking up a leadership role and getting nervous in public.

A fear is a normal emotion that everyone experiences and one can overcome it by trail. A phobia is an anxiety disorder, an irrational fear of an object or situation, an uncontrollable feeling and cannot be easily cured. Phobias include: Agoraphobia (fear to look at wide open places) Claustrophobia (being closed in small spaces), Acrophobia (heights); Camera phobia (fear to be photographed), hydrophobia (water), entomophobia (insects) and Phobophobia ...the Fear of fear!!

If you prefer a back seat in a meeting even when the front seats are vacant, the reason is not lack of enthusiasm but lack of confidence.

For many of our fears, the reasons are very hollow. With slight introspection and practice we can fight many of them. Consider this.

When your television goes blank, you believe that the fault is either with your set or cable operator, but not with the transmission originating channel. In the same fashion, the fault lies *not* with your wisdom, but with your fear of failure.

We all confront eight psychosomatic fears at some stage of life. Some of them appear silly to us but are nightmares to others.

KALEIDOSCOPE OF FEARS

FEAR OF FAILURE	Preparing for first public speech; Exam
SIMPLE REASONS	Fear of teddy bears, flowers, pretty animals
FEAR OF REJECTION	A budding or a celebrity writer not participating in story competetions.
FEAR OF FUTURE	A bride at her in-law's house; A soldier captured by enemy troops
FEAR OF OLD AGE	Insecurity, losing near ones, Hospitalisation
FEAR OF NEWNESS	Joining play school, Going abroad
FEAR OF UNKNOWN	Fear of devils, Superstitions and Vastu
FEAR OF SUCCESS	A player when promoted as captain; A rural student securing a prestigious IIT seat

While speaking on stage, fear of becoming laughing stock causes nervousness effecting rapid heartbeat, trembling knees, uneasiness in the stomach and a feeling to ease. Repetition of words, phrases, loss of memory, thought blockage, inability to recall the subject lead to stammering resulting in a lifetime embarrassing situation.

Consequences of fear:

Fear can be negative or positive. We shriek stepping on a snake and that extra adrenaline gives strength to jump out quickly. *Fear of falling* is fair to keep us away from the edge of the cliff whereas *fear of heights* prevents us from going beyond the third floor. Few people feel nervous even to call the railway enquiry to find information. Ordering food in a five-star hotel was one of my horrifying experiences some decades ago.

- Fear of insecurity kills employment opportunities (fear to go abroad, fear to shift from an unsatisfied job).
- Fear is letting irrational beliefs ruin common sense (marking on the belly with hot iron rod to treat chronic stomach-aches).
- Fear of superstition blocks decision-making abilities (not stepping out for an interview as the time is inauspicious).
- Fear of uncertainty compels to accept negative screenplays given by others (obliging to mails like: Send this message to ten people to get a lottery; forward to hundred people or you will suffer etc.)
- Fear of threat by others (Not starting a business believing the stars, or not accepting a good alliance as horoscope does not support).

To make it simple: Excessive fear causes physical problems like B.P and cardiac diseases, illogical fear leads to commit wrong deeds, baseless fear rushes us to flee when we are supposed to stand, irrational fear fetches confusion, Senseless fear forces us to hide when we are to be in the open, speculative fear immobilises decision-making, fear of trust prevents from believing loved ones, and unjustified fear makes us averse to change and keep locked in self-destructive behaviour.

When fear is such a disturbing emotion, why do people enjoy horror movies and books? The answer is that 'fear is not really a negative emotion. Enjoying horror is a kind of working through our deepest fears, *without actually having to experience*. It is like going to the edge of a cliff, with a confidence to be able to return..!'

Can we fight fear?

Certainly yes! You need not be a heroic warrior, but must be courageous to a minimal logical extent. 'Belief' is the cause for many fears. Surprisingly, belief itself is the antidote for fears. Play with fear till it vanishes. A child playfully throws a toy; you pick up and return. She throws again. Freud says that the child is experimenting with the *fear* of something disappearing and *pleasure* of regaining. The kid plays this frightening act till she gets confidence.

Ask yourself just two questions. First question: *What are the fears I am most afraid of?* The next question: *Why am I afraid of them?*

You may 'not' be able to answer them immediately. But think. After answering the two questions, here are five steps to win over your fears and phobias.

Step 1: Scrutinise your fears: a) How real my fears are? b) How much negative effect do these fears cause? c) Since how long do I have them?

Suppose you fear devils. Question yourself. Have you ever seen them other than in movies ? Have you ever witnessed or read in any newspaper that a devil killed a person ?

Step 2: After scrutinising the mental blocks, analyse: a) How do my fears influence the process of my decision making? b) How do they add to my sense of insecurity? c) Affect my healthy future?

Suppose you are in love. The astrologer says your future would be in great turmoil if you marry your beloved. If your love is true, anyway you would be depressed without your beloved. What more turmoil can happen to you?

Step 3: After analysing the issues, address them: a) What beliefs are blocking me? b) What transformations do I need to defy them?

Address your issues in the right perspective. You can't win over your fear of public speaking unless you go onto the stage. Is there any other way to fight it? You are frigid but want a companion. Either come out of your psychological barriers or search for a person who believes in platonic love without romance.

Step 4: If you don't ride on success, failure rides on you. Assess the *weak* spot of your *weakness* to hit hard at it.

> *Suppose you fear darkness. May be your mother warned you that devils rule the world in the dark. Her intentions were good, but resulted in Nyctophobia, fear towards darkness and shadows. Same way, your father might have warned you against swimming to keep you away from water. It might have caused hydrophobia.*

Step 5: Now you are ready for the war. Use different tools to confront each of your fears. What is required is willingness to start the battle and determination to continue it.

> *Step into the dark and stay for a while. Take few steps further. Play soft music. Sit and drink something cool or hot watching the shadows of trees moving. Relish the pleasant breeze. With all five sensory organs being engaged, suddenly you feel everything beautiful. Same way, keep a rubber lizard by your side while sleeping if you are fearful of those creatures. Go to the beach and watch kids playing in the water. Go into the sea up to ankle deep. Enjoy the waves hitting your feet. Go one foot further. Stay. You certainly would feel that you conquered the world.*

Daily before sleep, think how you *bettered* yesterday in implementing your plans. Make a steady progress and you find the results unbelievably encouraging.

Fear is not a 'problem'. It is a weakness. The weakness of a defeatist is that he believes in his weakness. By fearing something you cannot avoid a danger. Being cautious is different from being scared. Fear axes, shuts the doors of success. It is poisonous. It kills. Then what is the remedy? Only one..! Kill the fear before it kills you. Post mortem its body and the corpse would reveal these facts:

- Don't fear failure. Be aware that success is waiting at the doorstep.
- Taking risk is not dangerous. Not taking risk is the highest danger.
- Failure is not your inability. It's the ignorance about your ability.
- Don't fear that you may lose everything if you don't try. You will be left with nothing if you don't try.
- Failure doesn't mean that you are ruined completely. It means that you are more experienced now.

TENSION AND ANXIETY

TENSION IS UNNECESSARY FEAR WITH A REASON;
ANXIETY IS FEAR WITHOUT A REASON.

Tension means a gap between what you are and what you want to be. Greater the gap, more is the tension. Surprised with this definition? You are in a traffic jam. You want to be in the train. Tension..! You want to pass the exam. You are not sure of it. Tension..! Your wife is in the labour room. You want to be a father. Tension..! It is different from fear and nervousness. When a building suddenly starts quaking, you have every reason to be afraid and run out. That's fear! If you are always worried that the shaking window pane is an indication of a forthcoming earth quake, that is tension! If you spend sleepless nights since a month because you are visiting earthquake-prone Japan, it's nervousness! If you are imagining the possibilities of horrifying tragedies, it is anxiety! Living with a constant sense of tension is 'generalised anxiety disorder'!

Squeezing palms, rubbing fingers, recurrent wiping of the face are the indications of tension. It is amazing to note that tension over 'public speaking' stands first among people whereas 'fear of dying' goes to seventh position!

Anxiety and irritation go hand in hand. Nervousness of film fraternity on the eve of release is on a different plane. I have seen people hurling spectacles and breaking wine glasses when their picture fails. It involves fear of failure, losing money, charisma, drop in market rate, insecurity and fear of becoming a 'laughing stock'.

A pilot said, "During my training I had to jump with a parachute for the first time. I touched the ropes and thought: These tiny ropes are going to decide my life or death. Even if any two ropes are snapped, my body would crash to pieces. I looked down... shivered… It was an enormous landscape with pine trees on a small hillock. Holding my breath I jumped. The cool air invited me into its fold. As I was passing through clouds, I remembered the film, 'A walk in the clouds'. Then I landed. My immediate reaction was, 'let me do it again".

You can play cards alone but don't. Why? You get bored. There is no win or loss. You enjoy the ecstasy of winning, only when you lose. This is what the tension plays in our life. *We could have never learnt to be brave, if there were no tensions but only joy*. Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage.

Do not get confused among stress, panic, depression and melancholy. '*Stress*' is a hardship experienced while/after doing a job. *Panic* is related to fear mechanism involving external pressure. *Depression* is a state of intense sadness disrupting our social functioning, due to internal or external influence.

Winning over anxiety is different from *escaping* from it. A pack of cigarettes, peg of whiskey or sleeping pills draws you into more frustration. Anxiety is also different from 'concern'. Waiting for the child in the evening is love. Standing at the corner of the road is anxiety.

> *We accompanied my nephew, leaving for his higher studies. I still remember how tense his mother was, cautioning him on top of voice while he was crossing the road to reach the bus terminal on the other side. This is not about a boy of five but sixteen. She did not sleep during the night and started calling on her relative from 4 a.m., whereas her son was likely to reach there at 6 am.*

Reaction under tension:

I have witnessed candidates fainting in interviews. How do you react when you lose your purse… or trapped in a traffic jam while attending the most critical interview… or... do not find your watch while vacating hotel room? Lose your passport in a foreign country?

Do you weep or get irritated? Exasperate and fume out?

Or feel relaxed even in situations where you *have to be* serious… and proud of your 'take it easy policy'?

In the middle of the night you are engulfed by flames and if you can bring out only two items, what would you prefer to take out among your diary, parent's photo, pan card, telephone and address book, cash box, family album, important office files, passport? When you are panic; all demons like tension, frustration, shame and anguish all hit at one stroke.

A fifteen-year-old girl eloped with a first year engineering student. Two friends accompanied them in their car that met with an accident at midnight. The girl died on the spot. Police found 30 lakhs cash and gold ornaments worth more than one million. What would have been the reaction of her parents?

People react differently against an identical situation. The reactions may vary when a teenage girl comes home late in the night from school:

Case 1: Father knocks her down even before her explanation, warning his wife not to interfere. He resolves to get her married.

Case 2: Mother bursts into sobs. Her father jokes "Your mother is about to offer my hair if you were late by another ten minutes." He goes to his room *without even enquiring the reasons for the delay*.

Case 3: Mother is engaged in watching the TV, father is in the bedroom. The girl checks into the kitchen, finishes her dinner and retires to her room… no questions… no answers..!

Case 4: Mother grills. Father wanders in the room listening. He feels he is a judge and should not interfere. After the question-answer session, he retires to his room without giving any ruling.

Case 5: Mother asks her daughter the reasons for coming so late. Father jokes sarcastically 'Your genes'. Mother retorts, "No. My mother-in-law's..!" He rages, "One more word about my mother, I will cut your tongue". In the process they forget the original subject.

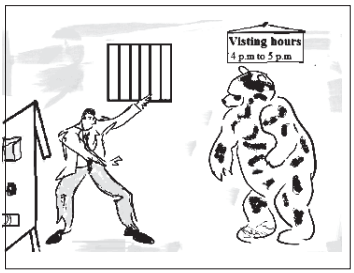
Case 6: All the three finish the dinner first, parents wait for the girl to tell the reason for delay, and if it is satisfactory they retire for sleep. If the reason is not satisfactory, one of them counsels the girl *next day*.

Decision in tension:

Never take a decision under tension. A lady came home to find her husband shaking frantically in the kitchen, with a wire running from his waist towards the electric kettle. She took a decision in a fraction of a second and struck him with a plank of wood to jolt him away from the deadly electric current… that broke his arm. Until that moment he was happily listening to his Walkman*

Count the number of 'F's in this: "Finished files are fine fruits of years of scientific deep study combined with the experience of years"**#**. Now relax and recount. You get one more 'f'.

Here are few tips to ease tension in exams: Be silent for one hour before exam. Read the question paper with a relaxed smile. Take a deep breath, tighten fist and release and start answering. Chew an elachi while writing for a relaxed feeling. (There are 8 'F's in the sentence).



How do you react if a bear enters your cabin where you are alone? You may shout for help, involuntarily throw the paperweight, or jump above the table and hold to the fan. Even you may explore the 'least possibility' of running out and bolt the room to muster more presence of mind. Instead:

1. You don't fear because the Vastu of your cabin is perfect.
2. You yell at receptionist for letting the bear in without appointment.
3. You do not try to rescue yourself with a preconceived conclusion that you are going to die anyway.
4. You are a doubting Tom and are not sure whether bears would kill people working in their offices. In that case, you envisage sending a memo to the management to provide grills around its employees.
5. Equating yourself with Arnold Schwarzenegger you fight with the bear unarmed, to get your overconfidence shattered, when it knocks you down with a single blow.
6. You continue to work unmindful of *present and existing danger* as you are confident of face reading. You knew at a glance that the bear had its lunch down floor and is not inclined for another prey.

Looking stupid? Replace the word 'bear' with 'problem'; and 'office chamber' with 'life'. When a problem penetrates like a bear into our life chamber, we act in similar manner. Insert the words Superstition, Anger, Tension, Procrastination and read:

1. Approaching the problem in wrong direction (Bear won't kill me. My Vastu is perfect.)	According to my astrologer everything would be O.K. in six months. I wait till then.
2. Frustration and Anger rather than solvation: (Fuming on receptionist for allowing the animal in.)	I am not the reason for my problem. Hence I can do nothing. What can I do if the question paper is tough? Everybody failed.
3. Total collapse (I die before it kills me)	I cannot take any decision under the influence of inertia and anxiety.
4. Depending on others to solve your problem (instead of fighting the bear, asking the management to provide grills)	Medical course is tough. I know the end result but my parents insisted. I resign to success now itself. Let them decide about my future.
5. Overestimating your capacities (fighting the bear unarmed).	I have seen bigger problems. I know anthorities from local constable to the President of America.
6. Sleeping over the problem (The animal might not harm me).	I cannot perform my daughter's marriage. Let the *karma* guide me. Time only will solve my problem

How to win anxiety?

You are late to catch a train. You coerce the auto driver to drive fast. You curse the crawling vehicles. Your blood pressure increases at every red signal. At last you manage to reach the station just few moments ahead. As you run to the platform with heavy baggage, you hear the announcement that the train is late by an hour. You curse yourself and go for a coke. While paying you are in for a shock. You forgot the ticket..! Sudden release of acids upset your belly. You are desperate to contact your friend nearby your house. You are relieved, as he assures you he would bring the ticket. But your happiness is short lived as time passes by. There is no trace of your friend. As a last straw on a camel's back, there comes the arrival announcement. You are desperate..! Still waiting..!!

You could have avoided these miseries, had you enquired about the arrival time of the train (forethought), started half an hour early (time scheduling), taken care of every article required for the journey in advance (prerequisite prudence) and enquire with the station master who would have told you that by paying just few bucks you can get a duplicate ticket (wisdom). To avoid tension, few people reach the station an hour before time that is another extremity.

Mood management:

Latha received an overseas call from her husband at midnight, "I took a loan in our joint name and could not repay. The creditor will be coming tomorrow morning by ten along with the police and summons. Don't panic. I arranged money with my sister and she has already started. She would reach you early by seven. Just handover the cash and the matter is settled".

Latha spent a sleepless night. In the morning it was eight… nine…ten..! There was no trace of her sister-in-law. She was shivering with tension. Police arrived at ten past ten. Amidst neighbours' curious looks, she was asked to board the police van. The humiliation was at its peak when she was made to sit along with prostitutes at the police station.

As the police were taking her to the magistrate, the sister-in-law rushed in and settled the matter. The crisis is averted but Latha refused to listen to her explanations. Raging with repulsion, she screamed, "Never ever talk to me. I will resolve this with my husband" and left the place crying.

We all tend to commit the same mistake of refusing to hear the other person. Her sister-in-law was truthfully trying to explain about the accident on the highway. Her woes did not stop there. The Police were attempting to book a case for carrying huge amount of unaccounted cash. Since she was influential, she could reach, though late. She wanted to explain but Latha was in no mood to listen.

Our reactions depend on what frame of mind we are in. This is where the 'pause button technique' comes into picture. Let us look into the above example differently.

Latha received second call from her husband that the matter was amicably settled, and the creditor would not turn up. Even his sister did not take the matter earnestly. She took rest midway, refreshed in a hotel leisurely and arrived late. Excusing herself, she was to explain the reasons for the delay, but Latha was cool. "Forget about it dear. Thank you for driving the entire night."

Anxiety and Depression:

When confronted by external stimuli, response of proactive people is always value-based. A failed student may attempt suicide or may sit and analyse on his weak points. Thus reactions are of two types: Controlled and Aggressive.

Same way, depression may be Apathetic or Agitated. Apathetic is 'melancholy extended to longer periods'. Agitated depression is again two types: Immediate and Delayed.

- Apathetic: A boy wants to read Harry Potter on the first day of release. His parents say 'no' in view of the forth coming exams. He performs poorly in the examination. 'Apathetic' children are cold and withdraw when things do not go according to their wish.
- Agitated - immediate: A ten-year-old boy feels that his sister is pampered more, compares his birthday gifts with hers and breaks her Barbie doll. Agitated children are disturbed for simple reasons and when they grow, either hit in anger or weep in despair.
- Agitated-delayed: A person loses whole salary in gambling, and thrashes his children at home, a *delayed* effect of depression.

We all experience depression at some point of time, but around 8% of people suffer from *chronic depression*, called 'melancholy'. Dealing with apathetically depressed children is agonising. They lock themselves, don't take food and cease talking. They tend to become more introverts when they grow and trouble their spouses.

Pray God for the strength, not the solution
For courage to change the things that you can,
Serenity to accept the things you cannot,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

COMPLEXES

IN THE COURT ROOM OF YOUR HEART
COMPLEXES ARE THE CONVICTIONS
PRONOUNCED BY YOUR 'FEARS'

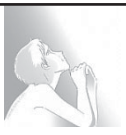
A complex is a core pattern of emotions and perceptions. An amputated leg in childhood would influence a person's life in profound ways. Even if he was wonderfully successful in overcoming the handicap, he might have many emotions, feelings of inferiority, triumphs, bitterness as well as determinations. If these thoughts *troubled* him, psychologists would say he had had a complex about his leg.

Complexes are two types.

Inferiority Complex involves shyness and introversion. Initially it may start as a *healthy dose* of self-consciousness but can easily turn into nagging self-criticism, gradually lowering the self-esteem, bringing down the confidence levels deeper into a whirlpool, where the person feels himself unworthy.

On the other hand arrogance, extreme self-importance, pride, overconfidence and rudeness are features of Superiority Complex. Some people *cover up their inferiority complex* with attack on others showing dominance. It is called pseudo superiority. All these escape routes appear to provide a temporary solution, but would end up damaging the respect in the long run.

People with superiority complex put others down and people with inferiority complex spread rumours. Avoid both. Feeling *superior* or *inferior* is not a pleasing state of mind. When a person realises that he is wrong, no matter how polite or humble he may appear to be, egotism *stops* him from saying 'I am sorry.' We don't realise that our real victory lies in accepting a mistake and thus *overcoming* the complex.



Confession of a soul:

My son accepted his mistake, "I will never do it again" said he, and requested me to make him as complete as I am.

I requested God that night "Make me as truthful as my son."*

Charles Dickens, a British writer, poor in his childhood, went to the playground on a festive day with an old and torn-out kite. A rich kid heckled him, "I have lots of kites to fly in the sky". Dickens smiled "I have only one kite, but lot of sky".

Inferiority Complex is an obsession arising from conflict between *the desire to be noticed* and *the fear of being humiliated.* A person raises his hand for an auto and if the driver does not stop, brushes his hair as if it was not for the auto. When you slip on a banana peel, you smile to show off to onlookers that you were not hurt, in spite of the wound on your knee.

Permanent complexes are different. *I am short… dark… poor… not beautiful… my pimples... falling hair... I am plump and stout… use spectacles… not intelligent…* We experience these feelings at some stage of our life. We need support (praise / confirmation / approval) from others to our *sense of self.* But when we don't get such 'patting' from others what to do? Fight on your own. Complexes can be fought upon with positive thinking. I quote my own life experience.

I was badly influenced by Napoleon complex, a term used especially for men with short height. It is named after a king, who compensated his obsession by seeking power through war and conquest.

I envied tall people and identified success with their height. I used to dream that I became a six-footer when I woke up next morning. My ranking in the class became minimal. My uncle might have noticed my predicament. He was a playwright. My father and maternal grandfather were also poets. He encouraged me to 'write'. My first short story was published in a child magazine. I was sixteen then. 'Though being a short guy, you wrote a good story' my friends said. I was thrilled with the complement, ignoring the pun. Then I wrote a play-let.

When the first performance of my play ended, the sound of claps was an ecstasy. I was on cloud nine. I realised that people recognise me with my creativity, but not with my height.

Our Prime Minister in those days Sri Lal Bahadur Sastryji was few inches shorter than me. I took inspiration from him. 'When a short man can become a Prime Minister, why can't I be a writer' I thought. I transformed my complex into penmanship and received Sahitya Academy Award from the former Prime Minister. Had I been two inches taller, this might not have happened.

People are naturally unhappy for what they *do not possess*. But think positive. Nature might not have blessed with what you wanted, but certainly did give you so*mething* else. Work on what you 'have', instead of brooding for what you do not have..! It is the secret to fight complexes.

To become miss world you require natural beauty and talent. But to be Mother Theresa it is enough if you have a kind heart. Instead of worrying for not being beautiful, try to serve people.

The origin of complexes:

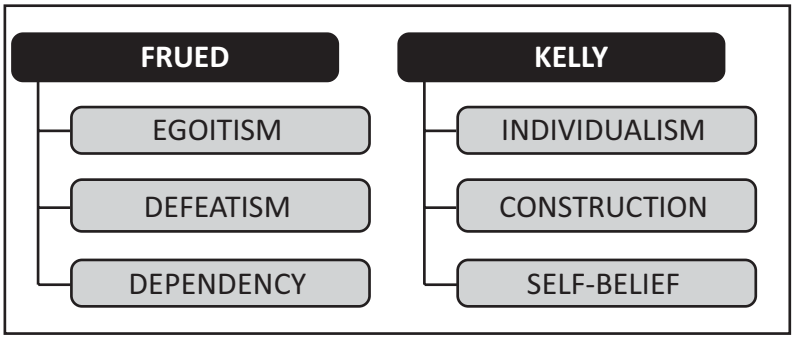
Complexes are so complicated that they cannot be noticed peripherally. The reasons for developing complexes themselves are complex in nature.

A fairly young mother, more often concerned with her personal beauty and office work, does not care in feeding and leaves the child to cry until the baby wears himself out. According to Freud, the mental fibre of the baby leads to a fixation.

Parents need not necessarily attend to every cry but should take optimum care, as the dependent baby develops "trust and optimism" during this stage. If this is not forthcoming, his ego becomes fragile and unstable, *needing the confirmation in his social persona* by other people. Oral fixation may lead to two extremes: Mistrust against the world or total dependency on others.

A young boy spends several months in a hospital surviving a dreadful accident. His construction of thought can lead to different perspectives. He may feel that he is lucky to survive, consider it as his second life and might be meticulously cautious in future. Or he may take that as his second chance to live, believe that life is short and start enjoying bungee jump, sky diving and other adventure sports. Similarly, a child heckled by people for his shortcomings may either develop inferiority or 'I-don't-care' mentality.

Freudian theories were debated during his days and even today, but nobody disputes his far-reaching impact on psychoanalysis. Psychologist George Kelly developed another theory that, the child develops self-confidence; with betrayal, feels that the only person that he can depend on is 'he', and chooses to approach relationships cautiously..!



Freud feels that isolation leads to defeatism or egoism whereas Kelly feels that it leads to construction and individualism. Both appear to be logical when we take the examples of both *dejected rogues* and *great people* with bad and frustrating childhood.

Complexes develop through four 'ok' stages, though it is *not compulsory* that each individual should pass through all of them.

1. Both of us are not ok**:** I am lonely and unhappy. You are bad. You never come to my rescue. (Some people continue to be in the first stage till death, either depending on others or cursing them).
2. Everybody except me is ok: My parents go to movies leaving me with my grandparents. They are more affectionate to my brother. (The prolonged second stage results in inferiority complex.)
3. I am ok but something is not okay with you all: Everything is wrong with my egoistic parents, unknowledgeable teachers and other elders. Hence I spend more time with my lovely and knowledgeable friends. (The extended third stage leads to superiority complex.)
4. Both of us ok: I love and adore people. (In many cases people reach the fourth stage after crossing forties… too late.)

Mark Twain wrote: When I was a boy of fourteen, I thought my father was so ignorant that I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.

How to overcome inferiority complex:

1. Date with yourself. The more you spend, the more you love you.
2. Don't gag to cover up your disabilities.
3. Cut on unnecessary friendships. Develop *positive strategies* like reading books, gardening, listening to music and prayer.
4. Don't be too conscious that others are constantly noticing you. People have enough time for their own work. Psychoanalysts say that a person spends only *10 per cent of his total time* to think about others. Suppose he thinks about hundred people (friends, parents and children), he spends only 0.001% of his time to think about you.
5. Don't worry about the pimple on your cheek or spend sleepless nights on noticing the first streak of grey hair. People appreciate you for what is 'in' your head, not what is 'on' your head.
6. Self-improvement is a skill that anyone can develop with patience, self-confidence and effort. When you know how to cajole, criticise, command and compliment yourself, you are sure to be the best.
7. Avoid gatherings and parties where your physical or mental competence is *belittled* or *heckled* by your sadistic friends.
8. You may feel depressed, insecure or jealous of people for their charisma, wealth, beauty and intelligence. You may not acquire all those qualities but think for a while. Who is the best in your company of people? What made him the best? Certainly not his *wealth, beauty* or *masculinity.* Isn't it?
9. Stop wanting to be someone else. Just be yourself and create your own identity. Sometime ago someone probably might have told you that you were not good enough and you have been carrying that luggage till today! Drop it right now. You would be much lighter, better and happier.
10. *Wealth is what you enjoy, not what you show to others*. Neo-rich people exhibit their wealth. They crave for recognition. People with immense wealth (either external affluence like billions of money, real power and genuine status; and internal wealth like wisdom and spirituality) never crave for showing it outwardly.

Good Samaritan syndrome:

Signing a personal guarantee bond *reluctantly* with the fear of losing a friend is the best example of gentleman's syndrome. "Feeling sorry after obliging others" is the dark room of our heart, where the negatives develop.

When you are about to leave for a movie with your wife, your friend steps in saying it's just a courtesy visit. You drop the program. Your wife goes in to prepare coffee.

We are not solitary creatures and have to live with others. There is no complaint if you are doing it all passionately. But life would become miserable if you do not live *in alignment with your personal values*. When your deeds are conflicting with your interests, there is one best solution: stick to values and communicate them properly.

In the above example, suppose you are visiting a close relative at the hospital. Will you hesitate to tell the guest your cause of urgency? Then why can't you tell him about the movie? If he cannot understand, how can he be a friend? One may argue that going to movie is not as important as going to a hospital and the former can be postponed. Can be true, if you and your wife don't regret sacrificing the movie and enjoy the company of your friend. Are you sure your wife is not cursing while making coffee inside ?

There are four assumptions here: 1. You are unable to express your intentions clearly 2. You are interested in staying with the friend than watching the film with your wife. 3. You ignore your wife's feelings. 4. You have the *uncivilised habit* of going to others' houses without prior appointment.

Few people argue that nothing is paramount than love and friendship. They never understand that love is giving and *not repenting* for giving. Moulding human relations to our choice may be little difficult, but not impossible. With the above applications, you would soon declare, "Lately, I have been acting just like myself."

Troubling others is not good, but apprehending always about others is also not good. The thumb rule here is: Demarcate the line where others' desires turn into your inconvenience. From then onwards, your relations will turn healthy. People will start understanding you and *'how you like them to be with you'*. Here are four steps to overcome Gentleman/Good girl syndrome.

1. Know the difference between loving and succumbing to love.
2. Do not let someone else write script for your actions.
3. Understand that 'Saying no' to others may develop animosity with them, but saying 'yes' generates enmity with your-self.
4. Give authenticity for your deeds. Try to meet your *ideal-self* soon. Suppression leads to addictions like sucking thumb, biting nails etc.

My friend residing at Tirupati had a strange problem and wanted me to advice. His house had virtually been turned into free lodge by his relatives disturbing his children's study as well his privacy.

I told him that my remedy would be harsh. He agreed, but was in for a shock when I told him the remedy.

"No. I can't" he murmured "… I can't do it".

"Then forget about my suggestion" I started leaving, but stopped to say, "Your relative arrives at 12 in the night. Your wife starts cooking for him. After his bath and dinner, you sleep in the hall offering him your bedroom. It is 2 a.m. by then. You feel terrible noticing your wife resting in the corridor in cold weather. You remember her complaining about bad headache the previous evening. All this makes you feel miserable. Is this not your problem and don't you want to come out of it?"

He thought for a while and said, "Yes. I will try".

What I advised him was to stay in a lodge, when he visits his relatives' town next time, and call on them only for breakfast or dinner. When the hosts would naturally ask him the reason, he should tell them that he would not like to encroach into their space. "If you feel that staying in a lodge is a costly affair, you finish your dinner outside and go to them only to sleep and that too with a prior appointment. This is a way to communicate the *limit* of your relationship with them." Within six months the result was positive.

I feel happy when people calling on the phone have the courtesy to ask the first question "Is this the correct time to talk to you?"

The 'whip' concept:

If 'feeling-low' *is* a *mist*, whip is the *compass* to show the areas of improvement. Walk with the compass through the haze (uncertainty) with four weapons: Wakefulness, Hard-will, Innovation, and Persistence. WHIP is a convenient word to remember to whip your complexes.

You make others happy through your deeds and behaviour. But if you *sacrifice* something for the sake of other's happiness, decide first whether 'owning' or 'giving' gives you more happiness. Once decided, there should be no regrets of any sort.

You plan to finish your studies or office work by certain time. Your friend joins you for a chitchat. You are unable to ask him to leave. The final result is that you stay one hour behind schedule.

You feel that you may lose your friend if you are rude. But see the situation from another angle.

You go to your friend without an appointment. He politely, but firmly tells you that he had fixed up a time schedule for his work. What do you think of him? Ill-mannered? No. You make a point to take his prior appointment from next time.

As you have realised his style of living, he also understands you. If he does not appreciate your system of working, you lose nothing except *him*. Real friends don't leave you. If somebody leaves you, he is not your friend.

Finally, draw a line in between the two extreme poles, inferiority and superiority complex. It is self-actualisation, a process of continuous assessment of own beliefs and motives. It is different from self-criticism.

If all the philosophies
From the beginning of human history till now
Are to be condensed into a single sentence,
It would be,
"Know your dharma, do it happily
And that is the best education."
Educe' in Latin means 'Know your-self.

STRESS

SIT IDLE, OR TRY YOGA FOR AN HOUR.
YOU FIND WORK 'LESS' BORING.

A blind person was surprised witnessing the world for the first time after the operation, 'when I have no eyes, I thought people on earth were cool and happy. I am shocked seeing the stress in their eyes now.'

Stress is the combination of physical and phychological reactions when people are challenged. It includes burnout, mental disorders, weight reduction (or increase), difficulty in concentration, depression, muscle-pulls etc. Meeting deadlines at work place, taking tough decisions, problems with spouse, misunderstanding with friends, worries with foes, financial distresses and natural disasters are some of the reasons for stress.

Stress can be good or bad. Good stress is called *estruses* and bad stress *distress*. Estruses give required energy and alertness. It could give a runner the edge to persevere in a marathon. On the other hand distress increases cardiovascular diseases and anxiety disorders. You would be surprised to know that trivial issues like stepping on a chewed bubble gum, not getting an auto, grandchild not faring well in his *first standard* could also be a cause of stress.

Aristotle said that people struggle to have a balanced life being unable to decide what really is important. A cricketer lamenting for not able to sing, may lose his cricketing abilities too. A girl worrying about her pimple may also lose her hair due to the worry.

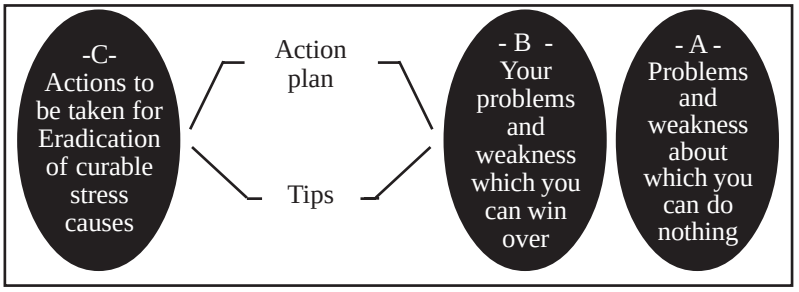
How to fight stress:

What is the total of all the numbers from '1' to '4'? The answer is 10. What is the total from '1' to '199'? The answer is in thousands. Which is a simpler? We feel that the former is..! No. If you know arithmetic, second one is simpler. It is 19,900 {199 X 200 / 2}.

Combating stress is easy, once you know the real cause behind it. Behavioural therapists suggest many stress management techniques like meditation, relaxation, exercise, nutritional diet etc. Here is one such simple technique.

Draw three circles. Write in 'A' circle your 'stress reasons' like bad health, inferiority complex, fear of public speaking etc. Various solutions are suggested in this book for each weakness. Transfer the problems that you 'can' work-on to middle B circle. In 'C' circle write down tips and techniques to be followed by you. You are now left with three lists:

- Stress origins in circle A, about which you can do nothing.
- Stress roots in middle circle, about which you can do something.
- A list of 'actions' in 'C' circle, to reduce your stress levels.


-C-
Actions to be taken for Eradication of curable stress causes
Action plan
Tips
- B -
Your problems and weakness which you can win over
- A -
Problems and weakness about which you can do nothing

Now is the final step. Stop worrying about the weaknesses and problems in (A) circle, as you can do nothing about them. Many people unnecessarily worry about problems in circle A. Once you stop brooding over those issues, you will get power to win over the stress causes (B) with the help of your (C) circle action plan.

Let's presume that you feel inferior due to stammering. Now you have two issues in 'A'circle: Inferiority and Stammering.

Stammering can be a physical or psychological ailment. If it is due to hypertension, it can be cured. Transfer it from A to B and write your action plan (to speak with a slow speed) in C.

But if your stammering is physical disability, there are fewer chances. Then the problem continues to stay in (A) and you cannot help. But you can certainly overcome your 'inferiority complex' by excelling in some other field even with stammering. Write your action plan (such as developing skills like writing, learning instrumental music or painting) in C and transfer your inferiority Complex to B.

Debilities of stress:

Various debilities are entwined around stress: 1. Frustration. 2. Identity crisis. 3. Vices. 4. Sadism. 5. Doubt and hesitation. 6. Disgust and repulsion. If you are experiencing any of these disorders, you are surely enduring some stress.

1. FRUSTRATION

A speeding vehicle from a wrong side hits your vehicle. You are a careful driver respecting traffic rules. What do you do? Do you…

A. Start arguing at the top of your voice?
B. Exit from there realising that he is not going to compensate for the damage anyway and argument leads nowhere?
C. Hit him for his irrational arguments?
D. Compensate him to avoid the nasty looks of amusing audience?
E. Retire from the scene, but your mood is spoiled for next ten days even though there is *no financial loss* as you get insurance?

Frustration is an emotion that transpires when we cannot reach our (or other's) expectations or when others doubt our integrity. Sometimes we frustrate without our involvement eg : Midnight prayers from a loud speaker, traffic and the sound pollution, uncivilised behaviour of educated, people talking at the top of their voice in mobiles etcetera.

Then what is the solution? Only one..! Understand the truth. It hardly matters whether you tensely grip the arms of the dentist's chair or let your arms relax on your lap, the drill is still on.

A poet writes: When I was a kid I saw a film. It's about the heroine. When her kids are yelling, the doorbell is continuously ringing and the dog barking incessantly, a lady settles down in a bubble bath, to avoid frustration. I used to make fun of the scene. But, now I see the sense in it. I invented a new mantra that is 'solitude and silence'. Even if I can't find a quiet place, I can still create an imaginary bubble around myself, shut out the disturbances and relax. The poet's strategy is excellent, isn't it?

Frustration is not the effect of other's behaviour but our reaction to our own frame of mind. A sleepless night or a small quarrel is enough to cause exasperation.

Why some people always look frustrated? It is their life style. A sports car is destined to contest in race. Suppose it has a *soul*. Initially it does not know what it is missing while lazing in a show room. This is *first* stage of people. Slowly it feels something is missing, but still does not know what it is. This is *second* stage. Then one fine morning someone pulls it out and zooms for a race. Being accelerated, jumped and steered adventurously, it realises the purpose for which it is designed. The purpose of life..!

The above example is comparable with life. We are either static or we race without any destination. Unless we realise what exactly satisfies us, we would remain thirsty. By drinking more and more, we erroneously think that 'more' is the answer, expecting more money, more power, identity, more from the spouse and children. Great directors like Man Mohan Desai and Guru Dutt and Dictator Adolf Hitler committed suicide due to such exasperations.

2. AGONY DUE TO IDENTITY CRISIS

Thirst for identity distinguishes humans from animals. We try hard to make people feel 'our presence' by hook or crook. Man's quest for recognition is like venom that saves life at times, but more often culminates it. Exhibiting a newly constructed house to strangers, attending social gatherings with expensive jewellery is a part of thirst for such identity. Psychologists say that guests complement such wealth with *jealousy* rather than *appreciation*. Adverse identity crunches may arise out of six reasons:

1. Despair due to lack of 'real' talent: A boy comes to city for a career in acting. He gets a few roles but could not improve on his talent. He has to settle for extra roles. He is frustrated. No doubt most successful people struggle in the initial stages of their career. But before choosing the target, think whether you truly possess required *minimal ability* or it is just your *illusion.*

You would save your time if you realise this early and avoid unnecessary stress. *Self-confidence is different from shallow confidence.* This is what happened to my first film direction.

Ask yourself three questions before entering any creative or business field: 1. Do I have the basic knowledge? 2. Am I getting confused between my enthusiasm and capacity? 3. Can I withstand pressure psychologically and financially till I get a breakthrough?

Here is a true story of a director. As we all know, it is difficult to enter the field without a reference. He had a brilliant idea. As he was well built, he joined as a guard at a film star's residence, brought vegetables, dropped the children to the school and thus got acquainted with his family. Noticing his desire and sincerity (he was truly sincere), the star recommended him as an assistant to a famous director. Later he had a chance to direct a film, in which I also played a guest role. But he was lacking creativity and was poor in technic. The picture was a disaster. He had no option except to work as an assistant. He did not like it and returned to his village to assist his father in agriculture.

2. Dejection for not getting breakthrough: The first category is about depression of people without any talent, whereas this category deals with dejection of really talented people. *Having a talent is different from being recognised.* It is called '*Breakthrough'*.

My lyricist friend who was paid 116 rupees for his first song, charges half-a-million for a film now. I was paid 40 rupees per week for my most successful serial 'Thulasidalam'. Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond, received 600 dollars for his story 'Dr. No' and was not paid one extra penny even though the film collected 3 billion dollars. Of course he had the last laugh when the royalty through his books equalled the 'gross collections' of the said film.

Don't get depressed. Success does not knock your door overnight. I know an upcoming director, who made two reasonably successful films recently, was sleeping on railway platform at Nampally a decade ago. While trying his luck at the studios during daytime, he used to pump water from the bore well entire night, carry it to the nearby hotel and fill the tank, in return for free breakfast. He owns a car and a house now.

3. Distress due to declining position: We discussed about people having no talent and about people with talent not getting the breakthrough. This is about third category of people who fail to sustain their position after the breakthrough. A music director was capable of tuning six different ragas from pleasant *kalyani* to melodious *sivaranjani* for the 'same' lyric. He could even tune a newspaper headline in *hindola*. But he was unable to change along with the audience taste and lost his charm. He was depressed, took shelter under alcohol, had strained relations with family members and later died with cardiomyopathy.

4. Restlessness while craving for more identity: People derive satisfaction through money, fame and power with few exceptions like freedom fighters, humanists like Vinoba Bhave and poets like Pothana and Vemana. A person can never be happy if his thirst for money and power is not quenched after an optimum level. The best example could be our politicians. They spoil their next generation with enormous wealth.The moment they lose power; they get depressed and encourage Rasta rokos and Hunger strikes, just to be in the limelight.

5. Thirst for identity in several fields: One has to decide whether to grow vertically or horizontally. Organisations like Maruthi and Kentucky Chicken climbed the success ladder vertically without diversifying business. Some others expand horizontally. G.M.R started with jute bags and is now in Airport Construction. Vijay Mallya expanded into real-estate and aviation from distilling. Attempting in more than one field is welcome if the attempt leads to success. But a failure in one sector should not cause losing self-confidence. Having talent in one field is not a passport for success in other fields. Many artists and writers were not successful as directors, few actors failed in politics and many politicians burnt their fingers in film production.

6. Emptiness due to retirement syndrome: An old person without work or a retired employee without productive hobby understands the pain of withdrawal syndrome.

> *A well-known comedian directed a flop film. Once a technician or an artist ventures into direction, other directors normally do not offer him roles in their future films. Having lost his busy life, the comedian was addicted to playing cards. Exemplifying peak of identity crisis he used to go to the club with make-up.*

3. VICE

'Beer is Danish national drink and the Danish national weakness is another beer' is a saying that defines 'vice' aptly. When self-interest grows beyond logic, a habit becomes 'unhealthy'. In Latin 'Vice' means surrendering to poison. A drunkard steals from his wife for a glass of cheap liquor. A business executive must have a cup of coffee as a jump-start for the day. A film star takes a peg of whisky before facing the camera. A lady has to consume pills to sleep and pills again to come out from drowsiness. Thus, vice engulfs in three ways:

1. Extreme psychological dependence where the body develops an increased need to feel relaxed and ecstatic (cigarettes, drinks etc.)
2. Hobbies of pseudo-happiness (window shopping, internet).
3. Life-threatening discomfort, miserable feeling and helplessness if not taken at regular intervals (Hashish, Ganja and Marijuana).

Smoking, drugs, alcohol and gambling are harmful vices; chatting, watching TV, movies, cricket, whistling, raucous singing in the bathrooms or in public are less dangerous, but still are addictions. Having known the ill effects, why people initiate these addictions? There are three reasons:

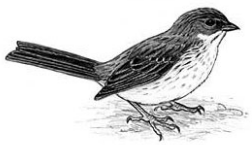
1. Family background: Son of a drunkard may either become a drunkard or totally averse to alcoholism.
2. Friends: Peer influence is great in adolescence that is more prone to addictions. A habit initiated by friends as an entertaining pastime becomes unavoidable vice later.
3. Emotional balance: People with low self-esteem are more prone to addictions taking shelter to escape from 'emptiness'.

This is how it happens: A soul was confused standing between hell and heaven, as they looked alike. The first guard invited him inside for mental peace, liberty and choice. The other guard offered thrill and ecstasy. As the tempted soul entered the second place, the guard locked the gates and smiled, "This is how the vices lure people into hell." *

A vice does not transpire overnight, develops as a passion initially and people don't realise till it becomes too late to quit. Hence it is said, 'Vice knows she is ugly and so puts on a mask when it embraces you'.

There were no sparrows in America two centuries ago. An army of inchworms invaded Philadelphia in 1868, grew rapidly and all of sudden they were everywhere, eating the leaves and plants. People were helpless and the situation became disastrous.

A British immigrant named John Beardsley found a solution. He imported a thousand sparrows from England. These little birds made short work of the inchworms and almost eliminated them. John Beardsley became a hero and known as 'Sparrow Jack'.



But the story did not end there. Within no time the sparrows multiplied drastically as there were no predators. Having adequate stuff to survive, they started destroying the plantations and became more harmful than the inchworms. United States had to spend millions of dollars to control these tiny birds and soon introduced legislation that no outside bird or animal should be imported into their country.

Australia faced similar situations with pet rabbits. Within few years, they were everywhere, ten times more than the human population. Government struggled to control them. Jamaican case was different. The Country of Forests imported secretary birds to get rid of the snakes. With the elimination of snakes, rats swelled in no time. To get rid of them, government imported mongooses. They almost ate every rat and turned on to lambs and chicken. The Jamaicans are still fighting for a solution.

You might wonder why I am quoting these examples. A student takes tea to avoid sleep, followed by cigarettes, chews nut powder to shun smoking, and then to pan-masala and ends up with *all the four*.

'Consuming limitless alcohol' is injurious to body and 'watching excessive entertainment' is injurious to mind. The withdrawal symptom without the idiot box is as dangerous as addictions like ganja and liquor.

TELEVISION AND FILM ADDICTION: Surveys reveal that on an average Indians watch TV for 3 hours and ironically spend 3 minutes on reading. People are enthralled watching TV serials because the melodrama releases serotonin and adrenaline. The story revolves around harassment of a newlywed girl or a lady in cobweb of problems. Viewers enjoy the release of adrenaline as they are not exposed to such cruelty in real life. In another case the heroine is projected as the Managing Director of a multinational company at the age of twenty, an unaccomplished desire for many housewives. It releases serotonin. Same reason applies to kids watching *Chota Bheem.*

Business jadugars know how to make people addicted to their products, films or serials. If the filmy people are to make a *commercial* film on Gowtham Buddha, they shoot a duet between him and Yesodhara. They keep an item-song by a lady in bikini, instigated by Indra luring Buddha back to the worldly pleasures.

To adapt Ramayana to the tastes of mass audience, the director does not hesitate to make changes. In the original version, Rama kills all his rivals at one go at the climax. In the revised screenplay, Ravana sends Vibhishana as a spy, but he changes his loyalty witnessing the nobility of Rama. Humiliated Ravana sends Kumbhakarna who kills Vibhishana and tries to rape the wife of Sugreeva. That would be the interval. When Rama kills him, Ravana sends intelligent Indrajeet who poisons Rama. Laxamana saves his brother sacrificing his life. The furious Rama kills the villain at the climax.

Filmy people never dare to show rich as good and poor as villains, as the audience are mainly middle and poorer class. Poverty is shown as a virtue, poor are ethical and rich as egoistic. Viewers, particularly students are affected in two ways. Taking life easy, they get influenced by the 'poor-man-ethics' and don't aspire to become rich. Some others dream rich, but don't work, because heroes in films grow rich without doing any work other than loving the heroine.

The bottom line is: vices harm us in three ways: health (cigarettes, drinks and gutka) money (gambling, races, and betting on cricket) and time (chatting and cinemas). Then how to come out?

- Take a decision to stop it immediately: Don't wait for your birthday. People fail stipulating 'dates'. Sales of cigarettes and alcohol fall in January. Yoga centres and Gyms become more busy. People start morning walks. The effect of New Year resolutions dies out slowly as it is always easy to take a decision, but hard to stick on to it. Bad habits are like a comfortable bed, easy to get into but hard to get out.
- Determine: Relinquishing an addiction is not easy but not impossible either. But 'desire to stop' is different from determination. The crucial phase of counterattacking temptations is called testing period.
- See your future in mirror: One of my friends was hospitalised with pancreatitis. Doctors advised him to either quit drinking or count his days. He attended many counselling centres without success. I advised him to sit at the same table where he used to drink and watch his wife and two daughters engaged in their routine, and imagine their fate without him; his daughters working as sales girls, his wife struggling to get her daughters married etc. It worked.
- Never try to offload your vice slowly: jettison an addiction totally and on the spot. Eliminating a vice 'gradually' (like restricting smoking to two cigarettes per day initially) is almost impossible.
- Change environment: Avoid spending time with the old friends. Different set of acquaintances give a different environment. Go to a remote place for a week with your spouse and children where you don't get cigarettes or drinks.

Best way to get rid of a bad vice is to surrender to another healthy addiction. As a thorn is driven out by another, a habit can be overpowered by another habit. If you are prone to using internet for long hours, start reading a novel. Early morning smoking can be avoided by doing something healthy like gardening. An author said, "I enjoyed sleeping till late. I substituted it with morning walk. Now morning walk has become my vice."

If you feel that your concentration levels are going down off late, stop talking to your friends on Sunday. If you are not good in spoken English talk entirely in English one day per week. Initially your friends (and even your family members) may tease you, but will see the result in three months.

Vice Holiday : This concept appears witty but you can give it a try. If you can avoid a bad habit for a fortnight, then avoiding becomes a habit.

> *Avoid your unwarranted habit for a day in a week. Avoid cell phone on Monday, internet on Tuesday, fast foods on Wednesday, chatting on Thursday and non-vegetarian on Friday. Stop watching TV on Saturday and be silent for few hours on Sunday. I assure… you will be amazed with the results within a few weeks.*

Sow an act and reap a habit. Sow a habit and reap a character. Sow a character and reap a destiny.* Many people have their own excuse to persist with their vices. The final words of an experienced (but realised) drunkard on his death bed were: "*People, who drink to drown their sorrow, should know that sorrow knows how to swim*".

4. SADISM

A leading comedian was my co-passenger in a two-berth coupe. He was incessantly praising a particular hero. Bored with his nonstop flattery, I said, "Your sycophancy is irritating. You cannot dare to talk ill about him before the media but at least can be genuine with me."

There was a change in the air. I continued, "I know the hero in and out at least a decade before you know him and perhaps better than you. I heard that he gave you a horrible time at a foreign locale."

He was honest the very next moment. "Yes" he said. Suddenly his voice choked, "He concealed a towel in my suitcase and covertly told the hotel security to check my luggage while vacating. It was all fun for him and his *chamchas*. But it was my worst humiliation. I became a laughing stock. I can neither censure nor afford to pay him on the same coin. After-all he calls the shots in the Tollywood."

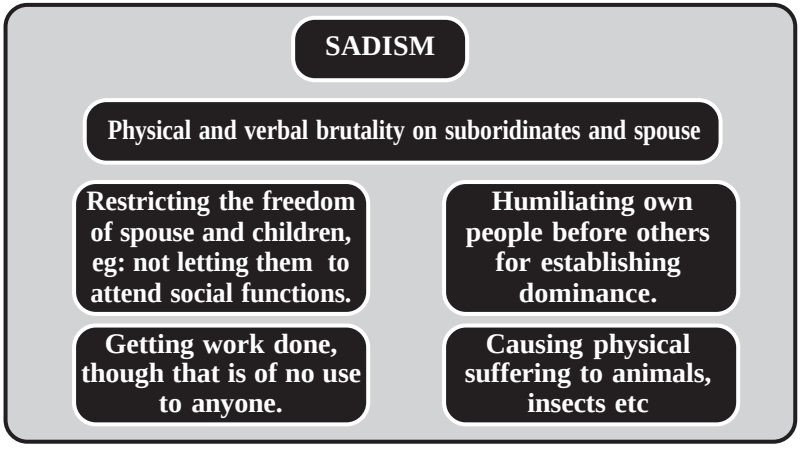
Another director tied an aspiring middle-aged artist in a gunny bag for few hours asking him to giggle inside, making him believe that it is being shot. All his assistants were enjoying.

We all have a concealed sadist in us. Otherwise there would not have been so much excitement in *ragging, rugby and cock fights*.

Ilse Koch, wife of a Nazi commandant, called 'Bitch of Buchenwald' ordered her soldiers to remove the breasts of fat Jewish women in the concentration camps. She used to tan their skins, turning them into gloves, lampshades and book covers. US military later convicted her for life and she committed suicide in 1967.

Nauseating? Disgusting? Have you not read in newspapers about a lady who was arrested for burning the fingers of a twelve-year old servant girl because she did not prepare bed-coffee on time? Is there any difference between Ilse Koch and this lady?

Sadism is a form of stress-releaser, but most dangerous psychological displacement often arising out of frustration. Some people (a) who had a repenting past (b) spouses of neo-rich people (c) spouses of people who are suddenly into political / police or any other modes of power (d) struggled hard in the past to come up in life but are unhappy with present life (e) strained relationships with spouse or children or both (f) insecure future… may throw their aggression onto a non-threatening personality. The following figure shows the modes of sadism.


SADISM
Physical and verbal brutality on suboridinates and spouse
Restricting the freedom of spouse and children, eg: not letting them to attend social functions.
Humiliating own people before others for establishing dominance.
Getting work done, though that is of no use to anyone.
Causing physical suffering to animals, insects etc

Frustrated people are of two types: sadists and masochists. The sadist enjoys torturing others and the masochist enjoys torturing himself. Masochists convert austerity into self-torture. They think that the more you torture the body, the more spiritual you become.

But torturing is violent. Whether you torture others or yourself, it is voilence; and violence can never be religious. 'What is the difference between torturing someone else's body and torturing your own body?' says Epicurus, the most materialist philosopher.

I adore a romanticist poet of last century and always quoted him in my works. My cousin's grandfather was his neighbour. I was aghast by his unbelievable revelations about the poet. He told me that they used to listen to the pathetic wailing of the poet's wife in the silence of darkness. The poet used to torture her so gravely that the poor lady was seen hiding the scars on her body during day time.

Sadism does not show up overnight. It starts from simple emotional or physical attacks to well-planned outbreaks. School bullies intimidate others by ragging because of the itch for power and domination. They enjoy the terror. This should be ignored as just a phase in the childhood. But something more serious acts like pinching, injuring and torture requires counselling. If your child appears to take pleasure when someone gets hurt or tortures beautiful insects like dragonflies and butterflies, these may be early warning signs of a possible problem. How to overcome sadism? If you feel that off late you are behaving sadistically, s*pend more time with kids, visit old age homes, orphans, and call on terminal patients.* The more you listen to the unfortunate, the sooner you would know how fortunate you are and become more humane.

5. DOUBT AND HESITATION

Our anthropology and science are evolved by not merely accepting the existing theories. 'Doubt' is uncertainty about an established fact. Our rational thinking, philosophy and even researches on astronomy revolve around 'doubt'.

On the negative side, doubting own ability is a *virus* that grows feeding on our confidence. It causes inhibitions, delayed efforts, and hindering the results. A doubting Thomas is someone who refuses to believe without 'direct' personal evidence. The term is based on the Biblical account of Thomas the Apostle, a disciple of Jesus who doubted His resurrection, and demanded to feel His wounds before being convinced. Doubting Thomas is synonym for sceptic nature of people.

If you are doubtful about reversing the car, you would never learn driving. A housewife can never enjoy a vacation, if not sure whether she switched off the gas knob in the kitchen. Doubting the spouse makes married life a hell. People who doubt their abilities smile less.

10% of people in the world are colour-blind, but do you know that 90% are laughter blind. Society represses laughter. It wants you to be serious. Your parents and your boss want you to obey them seriously. Your teacher punishes you if you smile when he is teaching. Have you not seen a mother warning her 14 years old girl not to smile too much? If she asks why, the reply would be, "what others would think?"

Fearing the neighbours and society is another cause of concern. No doubt society stipulates certain ethical norms (like public kissing or urinating in the open). But you need not doubt your freedom, if you are sure that your acts neither harm you nor the society.

Parents (*even though they like their child's choice)* hesitate to approve an inter-caste marriage fearing the society. But what is society? It is your friends, relatives, neighbours, postings on Twitter and comments on Face-book. I made a controversial statement, while delivering a speech on 'individuality and the societal norms'. I said, "If you live by what society says… you will be living in the last century. Society never bothers about you. Instead, you bother more about what the society thinks about you."

To support it, I gave an example.

A boy proposed to a girl, but she rejected him saying that her marriage was already fixed with her boyfriend. The dejected man went away. He was in great love with her and attended her wedding. There the unexpected happened. The bridegroom died with a cardiac arrest while bending down to tie the wedding knot.

There was pandemonium but the bride recovered soon. She looked around; found the unshaven gloomy man in the crowds. She asked him, "If you are still willing, we marry here on the same dais now, on the condition that you pay me a lakh".

As he accepted, she requested her people to remove the dead body and asked the priest to continue the proceedings.

Even before I hardly finish, the participants start shouting, "No..! Ghostly..! Characterless..! How could she do that…Oh my God!"

I do not resist their emotions but ask them, "May be you are correct. So, how much time should she wait for?" A participant rises, "At least for thirteen days from her husband's death." Another disagrees "The bridegroom has not yet tied the knot." Another girl objects saying, "After the memories vanished and she forgot him, may be after a year." I smile, "She forgot him in a second. That's why she proposed to the other guy", but nobody would be willing to take it. Then I continue.

"According to a 'will', she will inherit property only if she marries before her 24th birthday. This poor girl urgently needs ten lakhs for her mother's kidney transplantation and has to pay one lakh advance the very next day. She has to take a decision immediately as it happens to be her birthday" I pause for a moment. "Now tell me. Was she correct?" Everybody nods in agreement.

And that is the society. Opinions are our perceptions. Never be scared of the society once you are sure that your actions do not harm others. Live your way and let people decide whether to be with you or not. This is called 'Personality', a word derived from Latin 'personae', which means mask. If you wear different masks for others, you have to keep on adjusting them to hide your originality.

Believe in your own 'absolute value'. It may appear as arrogance or materialism. Let it be. Don't bother about the people who comment without knowing you. Remember… dogs bark only at the unknown.*

Doubt and superstition go hand in hand. In a game of cards the loser moves from one chair to another, changes his direction, takes cards with left hand, or frequently goes to the rest room. He never understands that the best thing is to stop gambling and go home.

When a girl wants to trim her hair, her family resists as it is against their custom. She does not care and says all her friends had the cut. Both are wrong. The family members should suggest 'Go for it if you feel that you look good with it and not just because all your friends had it. It is called your individuality'. On the other side, the girl should also think 'what gives me more pleasure? Cutting the hair or respecting the sentiments and traditions as per my parents?'

6. DISGUST AND REPULSION

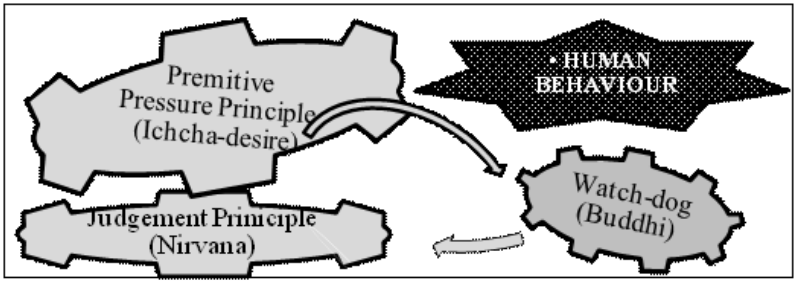
Drip a drop of lemon on a baby's tongue. Her disgust can be identified with a wrinkled nose, lowered brows and narrowed eyes. Disgust erupts from disappointments like failure to get a rank, ill health of a beloved, not getting the expected amount and sickening situations like a stinking smell and sound pollution. Mentally lethargic people are different. They live in a kind of never ending hopelessness.

Distrust distances people from you, whereas disgust takes you away from you. Permanent depression sneaks within self, due to dissatisfaction with own life style, financial instability and bad relationships. It takes a longer time to identify such *mentally disgusted* people. When the head of the family is disgusting, members fear to go near him. The hitherto lively atmosphere of the house changes with 'I am coming' warning sound of his vehicle. It is not love but power.

A continuous conflict goes within us and it is quite natural. When you see an expensive car and sure that you cannot own such a costly car in your life, you may:

1. Feel depressed *or*
2. Contended that you don't require the car or
3. Curse the society for your poverty or
4. May try to earn by corrupt means.

You may not choose the last option for two reasons: Ethics and Fear of arrest. Thus your behaviour depends on *three parts* of brain: 1. Primitive pleasure principle 2. Judgement Principle 3. Watch dog.



1. Primitive pleasure principle: This part of the brain operates from birth, without control or restrictions. It insists on fulfilment of needs (like water, food, warmth and comfort) and avoids the unpleasurable state (like being wet, hunger and cold).

'Ichcha' is totally selfish and wants 'immediate gratification' like crying till fed, unwilling to control the bowels etc. When children cannot get their desires accepted (like watching late night TV) by their parents, they emotionally blackmail them (weeping, yelling, throwing food plates) till the opposite person accepts their primitive pleasures.

2. The ethics principle: However, as the child grows, the pleasure is controlled by judgement. The child learns how to 'behave' in a disciplined manner with self-control under the guidance of elders.

If we were ruled entirely by Primitive pleasure principle (ichcha) we might find ourselves either demanding or stealing from other people to satisfy our own cravings. Judgement principle allows us to know more *suitable means* to ventilate anger, delay or totally abandon it, basing on a socially appropriate manner.

3. The watchdog (Buddhi): At a marriage reception a child may cry for the colourful balloons hanging from the roof or ice-creams on the dining table, unmindful of delicacies. You don't cry for the wedding suit of the bridegroom or saree of the bride. Thus Buddhi stands as the *ultimate* watchdog, trying to curb unacceptable *ichcha*. Same way, if a person overtakes you in traffic, your Buddhi prevents you from chasing him down.

To keep it simple, if life is a journey, the speeding wheels are 'Primitive pleasure principles', brakes are 'judgement controls' and the leg which is operating the brakes (whether to enjoy the speed or be cautious) is the 'Buddhi'. Thus these 3 parts have separate motives to help a person survive.

Ego-strength:

The judgement principle tries to settle the conflict between basic urges (created by the Primitive pleasure principles), and idealistic standards (created by the *Buddhi*). The ability to function between these two forces is called *'ego-strength'* that decides a person's style of living as well as success.

When a boy is in a dilemma between watching an irresistible movie and studying for next day exam, his Buddhi says 'study' and ichcha says 'movie'. The powerful ichcha convinces that he can read after him the program. After the movie the Buddhi says, 'read now'. Ichcha says 'Your eyes are burning. Sleep. Get up early tomorrow and read'. When the alarm bell rings in morning, it again says, 'Switch it off. There is no point in reading for few hours before exam. Sleep and feel fresh.' Your ego-strength decides between your Buddhi and ichcha and ultimately your fate.

A lady may weep loudly near the accident spot unmindful of people and media cameras. The Prime Minister does not do. When her son Sanjay Gandhi died in a plane accident, Indira Gandhi was so composed that she went to console the mother of the co-pilot who also died in the accident. It is the ego-strength.

Defence mechanisms:

A corrupt police official 'enjoys' a film where the hero spits on a fraudulent police officer. A girl plans to read uninterruptedly but cannot refrain from calling her friends. A person enjoys a lady smiling at him, but cannot accept his wife talking to a male neighbour. In situations where *Buddhi* is in conflict with *the Primitive pleasure principle,* or when external threats are posed to Ego-strength, the person inadvertently takes shelter in different irrational acts, called 'Defence Mechanisms'.

1. Denial: Arguing against an accepted situation.
   - Seeking 4th opinion after 3 physicians diagnosing it as cancer.
   - Distrusting the computer, when it shows that you have failed.
   - Not accepting your previous night's uncharacteristic behaviour under alcoholic influence.
2. Intellectualisation: Instead of enjoying normal emotions like smiling, grinning or frowning; focusing on intellectual aspect.
   - Discussing the 'technical aspects' of a tear-jerking sentimental film or rib-tickling comedy movie to establish '*I am different*'.
   - Excessive use of painstaking explanation to avoid guilt feeling. An old man feels guilty after darting his car into another vehicle and tries to explain meticulously each point leading to accident.

3. Projection: Giving illogical reasons for a hollow behaviour.

   - A person doesn't like his brother, but not loving own brother is unacceptable culture. He projects that his brother does not like him and therefore he is avoiding him.
   - A drunkard who does not fulfil his responsibilities says that he took shelter in drinks to escape from the harassment of his wife.
   - A person proposes to women, projecting that his wife is not physically fit for physical companionship.
   - The boss dismisses his secretary for her poor performance, but the fact is that she is not accepting his passes.
   - A person evades taxes and argues that anyway the money does not reach the Government but goes into the pockets of the politicians.
   - A student on not getting admission in medicine projects 'I never liked surgery, good that I did not get a seat.'

4. Reaction formation: Taking consolation somewhere else, rather than searching for true solutions.

   - Boozing to forget worries; playing cards to forget wife's ill-health, escaping to pilgrims to overcome the agony of business loss.
   - Succumbing to stupid irrational superstitions. 'Sacrificing a child to come out of business loses' is the peak of this defence mechanism.

5. Regression: Degenerating ethics, age, integrity and culture.

   - Weeping like a child.
   - Thrashing ruthlessly.
   - Using nasty language that anyone would feel ashamed of.

6. Romanticising: Colouring *sickening* incidents or fabricating a past.

   - Police arrests a person for playing cards, beat him for head strong replies and lock him up. After few decades, he describes it as a wonderful experience.
   - A person harasses a girl and is debarred from the college. It is a true story till then. He adds his fantasy and tells his friends that the principal revoked his suspension, he passed in flying colours, and the girl apologised him. In few cases, after repeating the concocted story many a times to their friends, these people 'whole-heatedly' believe that their fallacious story is true.

7. Suppression: Suppression includes subduing others or own sorrows till it blows up.

   - Shutting the door of conversation while losing an argument, by using phrases like "You are a stupid… I am wasting my time in this argument…"
   - A girl commits suicide because of the torture by in-laws. She does not give a hint to her parents or search for other remedies.

8. Undoing: Getting solace from own sorrows by domination.

   - A group of people heckle one of their weak associates to show their supremacy.
   - Hurting the daughter-in-law at dinner time and talking sweetly next morning as if nothing has happened; Napoleon used this technique to praise an officer after reprimanding him in the previous meeting.

9. Displacement: Displacement can either be involuntary, positive or negative, reacting to pleasures, unmindful of acceptable behaviours. A person hugs or kisses the stranger standing next to him on knowing that he won a multi-million lottery. Negative displacement includes countering on a lesser threatening target.

   - Beating children due to financial worries.
   - Slamming the door furiously after losing an argument.
   - Checking on internet every detail about the terminal disease of the spouse to get relief from mental agony.
   - Coming down from the dais and scribbling on a paper feverishly after failing to speak successfully in a public meeting.

Transferring negative emotions (like stress or anger), into positive tasks (like gardening, dancing or a sport) is called positive displacement about which we discuss in the next page.

Let the tension settle down. Nobody can solve your misery except yourself. Analyse the cause for the despair and be brutal in finding various ways to fight your desolation. Your wife proposes a movie when you are besieged to find the misplaced house documents urgently needed. You fume. Analyse. Is it necessary to press the panic button? You can as well take help from your family members to search. As the sun definitely comes out from the thick clouds, in a flash of memory you would recollect where the papers were kept.

Suppose your parents insist to relinquish your passion to watch your hero's movie on the very 'first day'. You are not happy. You can:

- Deliberately continue the habit, not caring parents.
- Continue it secretly without hurting them.
- Convince them about the thrill in it.
- Emotionally coerce them till they agree.
- Understand their logic and get rid of the habit.

Any one of them is better than your *chronic gloominess*. When you are low, you are not the only sufferer. There are two Ps for misery: People and Problems. Don't argue. Discuss. Convince or get convinced.

Key to overcome a weakness:

Hitherto we read about negative defence mechanisms. Here are a few *positive mechanisms* to overcome weaknesses:

1. Altruism: Taking suggestions and giving constructive service to others that brings pleasure and personal satisfaction for both.

2. Anticipation: Planning against future discomfort.

3. Humour: Expressing through witticism making others happy.

4. Introjection: Making life happy by blending hobby and career. Ex: Studying veterinary, agricultural or hotel management, if you are interested in animals, nature and cooking respectively.

5. Sublimation: It is converting libido into achievement. A student, confronted by romantic thoughts, can divert his 'pain' into becoming a painter or a poet. Freud gives more sinister examples like a sadist becoming a boxer, rugby-player, surgeon or a dentist. Psychoanalysts consider sublimation as the *most productive defence mechanism.*

6. Idealisation: You idolise your favourite star to be kind, intelligent, ethical, leading a perfect and wonderful life. You ignore the star's grosser habits and background. A boy while going to his grandfather's village dreams about varieties of food items, gardens, swimming, but doesn't think about insects, heat, power cuts etc. Idealisation makes us feel better in paying attention to things we desire, than thinking of unpleasant facts.

Positive emotions:

After discussing Fear, Anger, and Frustration now the final question is: Are we supposed to elude these emotions? No. There is no purpose in living without emotions, but let them be positive.

- *Anger: A husband promises but does not quit smoking. His wife stops eating, takes an oath and finally succeeds. Thus anger to the right degree for the right purpose is essential.*
- *Fear: A young couple are on their honeymoon. The boy proposes a boat ride. The girl is afraid. He offers his hand assuring her with 'mai-hoon-naa' posture. She jumps into the boat and is about to slip into the water. He hugs her and assures her. The couple cherish the memory for decades. She never tells him that she was a gold medallist in swimming.*
- *Disgust: You are a senior worker in a factory, wherein your friend is terminated from the service on health grounds without any compensation. You are disgusted with the state of affairs and fight for the cause.*
- *Doubt: A rich handsome boy proposes. Everything appears to be excellent. But you want to verify his credentials. Your doubt turns out to be true.*

Analyse, Locate, Encounter and Change is called "ALEC" principle that helps developing positive emotions.

Emotionlessness:

'Emotion' is the exhilaration of a pleasant or painful or agitated feeling. Animas have very few emotions like fear and anger, whereas we have *more than hundred* emotions like joy, helplessness, excitement, jealousy, irritation, boredom, shame, ecstasy, loneliness, cheerfulness, insecurity, hurt and fulfilment to name a few.

A woman applied for divorce. As the judge asked for the reasons, she said, "He is never angry so that I can beseech; never gets irritated that I can pray for my mistake; never depressed so that I can console; never smiles if I joke, or exited so that I can share it." The judge immediately granted divorce.

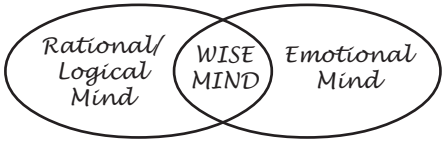
Amygdale and Thalamus are the parts of brain that are responsible for defensive and aggressive behaviours. Extreme emotion or total emotionless attitudes are a matter of bother.

The amygdale oriented husband drops down on to his knees in ecstasy on seeing his wife in a stunning combination of a white saree, jasmine and a matching pearl necklace on a full moon day and exclaims, 'Oh. Angel! Are you the manifestation of beauty?' The next day he slaps her for forgetting salt in sambar.

Contrary to this, the thalamus-oriented husband sighs with despondency and says "Beauty is temporary, saree is transitory, flowers are momentary and life itself is impermanent'. Next day when his wife forgets salt, he says metaphysically, 'We eat to live. Salt is not the matter here."

If you are too amygdalate, you lose relationships and health due to anger and stress. If you are too thalamus oriented, you will be missing the beauty of the surroundings and companionship. Then what is the solution?

The best way is to discriminate *when* to be emotional and *where* to be rational. Our mind can be viewed as a Venn diagram with the emotional mind on one side and the logical mind on the other. Both of these intersect at happy medium which is termed as the *wise mind*.



To understand it in one sentence, be emotional while you are pleasant, and be thalamus oriented when you are in a negative mood.

Don't wish problems were easier
Wish you were better
Don't wish for fewer challenges
Wish for more wisdom
Don't wish for fewer negative emotions
Wish for more positive skills.

SECOND STEP

AS A STONE IS TO BE CARVED WITH A CHISEL
TALENT IS TO BE CARVED BY 'EFFORT';
AIMING OVERNIGHT SUCCESS IS LIKE
BREAKING THE STONE WITH A HAMMER

DEVELOPING STRENGTHS

Jean Dominique woke up *twenty* days after a massive stroke to find that his whole body, except the left eye was paralysed. This alone distinguished him from any other object in the room. But he did not want to die just as a boiled potato and started 'writing' a book. An assistant read out each letter from the Alphabets Board and he would blink his eyelid on finding the correct letter. The book **'**THE DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY' was completed with more than 2,000,000 blinks and was an instant success and was later made into a film.

You are not an extra character in the story of your life. You are the icon of your autobiography. Your presence has contributed something to history or at least made a difference to someone.

Asked whether there would be any difference if she had not existed, the beggar showed the pavement and said, 'Yes. Instead of ten, there would have been nine'.

And that is the spirit. You may not be a Michel Jackson to be a dancing icon or philanthropist (many are not aware that he has donated more than 500 million dollars), but still you have your own entity. Some people may dislike you *not because you are bad* but may be they don't like your philosophy or… maybe they envy you. Don't mind if you are hated for what you are, than try to be loved for what you are not..!

Do you know that at least five people somewhere would be thinking of you for a second every day, at least four people love you, three adore your talent however trivial it might be, two would be thinking of your smile and that you might not even know their name, and there may be one even ready to die for you.

Never did you realise that life would not have been so cheerful for some people including your parents or spouse or children, had you not been there in this world … and you made that difference? Who knows? Maybe you are the person who would unknowingly create the history.

Rosalind Franklin was exposed to massive radiation to get the photograph of a strand of DNA and died of cancer at 37. Watson and Francis Crick, the Noble Prize winners for the discovery of DNA structure did not even acknowledge her, though her helix image provided them much required crucial evidence. However she is still remembered for changing the history of gene-world.

Success and satisfaction:

We read in fairy tales about a young warrior crossing the seven oceans to free the beautiful princess by killing the evil conjurer. The conjurer in life is 'defeat' and the seven hurdles are: Fear, doubt, vice, laziness, frustration, anger and self-pity. If you conquer them the PRINCESS OF SUCCESS is ready with a garland called 'Fulfilment'.

Every event is registered in our mind as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. Unpleasant events weaken body and mind. It is not the 'work' but the lack of interest makes us tired. Believe that '*I am alone responsible for my health and happiness*'. History shows that great leaders, scientists and philanthropists who were happy with their work lived longer and worked actively till death.

Many believe that one has to struggle for success keeping happiness at bay. No. Deriving pleasure from work itself is success. For the question, 'What is success?' my answer is 'Being cheerful today and working more happily for a better tomorrow'.

Success has no full stops but only commas. Achievement in studies, victory in games, the first pay packet, good romance with spouse, buying a vehicle, taking parents to a pilgrimage, children getting ranks, first fearless speech on stage and even creating a own joke… is success.

You might have forwarded many jokes, quotes and other interesting messages. There are more than a million jokes and quotes created by somebody somewhere sometime..! Have you ever created at least one joke on your own? Try. It is not as difficult as you think. It would be a wonderful experience.

The 3 sources of happiness:

People derive pleasure from three sources: *Family, Societal* and *Individual*. Balancing among these three is success.

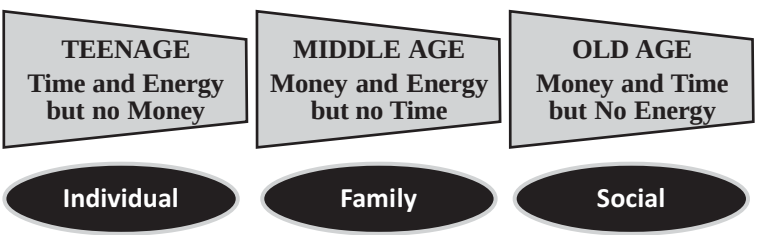
1. Cordial family relations keep people cheerful. Unfortunately many do not consider this as success and try to find pleasures elsewhere. Few business tycoons, film celebrities, politicians and socially successful people are failures with problematic children, unhappy marital relations etc. There could be two reasons. They might have neglected family in the initial stages of life with thirst for money and recognition.

Secondly, they might have been unhappy with their spouse and compensated their ego through work, money and recognition. Why a compassionate man and an intelligent woman may not make a good couple? Why love diminishes after marriage? Why are some couples unhappy? The raison d'être is inability to understand the concept 'I-You-We'… understanding the self (what am I), other person (what are you) and the relation (how best can 'we' be).

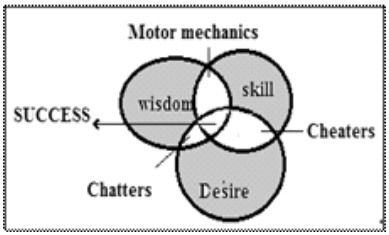
2. Cordial family relations may give *cheers*, but life cannot be comfortable without money, even with a great spouse and most lovable children. Social success means money, recognition and fame. It is a hypocritical assumption that all human relationships are non-commercial. Money may not be everything, but surely it is a part of everything. I know the days when petrol was sold for RS. 1.25 Per litre and beer for RS 4. Now they are 60 and 75 respectively. By the time you complete reading this book, they might even touch 100 rupees each.

3. Individual happiness is to 'love thy presence'. You need not be a great painter or musician to get involved deeply in your work to forget the outer world. A little isolation, a quick prayer, a meaningful book, a stage play, a live match, a paint exhibition and a nurtured pot plant should tell you how to stay with yourself. If you are not happy with yourself, nothing can make you happy.

Happiness is based on our Energy, Time and Money (E.T.M). The tragedy with life is, at teenage we have no money to spend in a way we choose to eat lavishly, watch movies, wear new clothes and ride modern bikes. At middle age we have no time, as we would be spending time to earn more money. At the old age we have both money and time but no energy to enjoy.



The skill, desire and wisdom:



The key differences between animal and a human being are desire, skill and wisdom. Permutations and combinations of these elements constitute three different personality traits. The correct blend of them is *success.*

Chatters*:* People with overflowing unsolicited wisdom and teeming 'desire to be identified by others' turn out to be *chatters*. Without much skill and having no work, they try to establish their presence with too much talking. They can be found in train journeys and marriages giving lectures about any subject under the sun. The idiom, '*Coins make more noise than the currency notes'* is created for them only.

Motor mechanics*:* A person with wisdom and skill, but without desire is called motor mechanic. A mechanic is an expert but works for the owner. These people utilise their extraordinary talent, but never think of owning a company or rise to a key position. They love to be workers rather than organisers.

Cheaters: People with negative wisdom and lack of ethical values are called cheaters. They land up in jails (Mining brothers, Suresh Kalmadi former chief ministers Lalu Prasad Yadav, Sibu Soren). These people want power and money at any cost and have enormous skill to bribe and deceive people.

> *Harshad Mehta, a secondary grade failed student cheated the public and banks to the tune of 5,000 crores exploiting loopholes of the stock exchange. With the help of fraudulent and innocent bankers as well, he went on purchasing stocks and artificially boosted the share prices. At one stage the index touched the 2000 mark from 1200. When a reporter from a daily smelt the rat and investigated, the entire Indian stock market collapsed overnight.*
>
> *Many became paupers and few committed suicide. Mehta died in jail after nine years while the trail was still going on*. A film (Galfa) was made on this scam.

Enthusiasm and Anthropology:

Have you ever thought that *'desire'* is the origin of intelligence and the anthropology of mankind revolves around it? Yes..! Civilisation would not have progressed so far without desire. Desire to eat non-vegetarian food is the first step of evolution. We know that man has evolved from apes and many types are vegetarians. Then how did he transform to non-vegetarianism? Let us contemplate an amusing fiction.

Imagine few million years ago a deer getting caught in a forest fire. While dying, it might have rolled upon a salty soil, amidst chillies and curry leaves. The body-fat inside might have fried it, giving the flavour of Deer-65. Man tasted it and was thrilled. But nature never intended mankind to be non-vegetarian. Predators, for example eagle has a spiky beak, crocodile-sharp teeth; tiger-potent paws and anaconda-a strong tail. Even birds like woodpecker have pointed beaks. But man cannot even chase a rabbit in the forest.

Then an idea struck him. For the first time he originated an idea that by hurling a stone he could kill an animal. The 'Weapon'..!

This was the moment when man started 'thinking'..!! His strong desire enabled him to invent a *weapon* that was not part of his body… a **stone**!!! First time in the history, an animal called human distinguished himself from other creatures.

Creation of weapon is the first sign of intelligence on earth. The word '*science'* means knowledge in Latin. 'Why-What-How' is the origin for great inventions..! After the discovery of stone as a weapon, man learnt that it would be easier to hunt if the weapon was sharpened. Homo habilis was the first species that used stone 'tools' around 2.3 million years ago according to our positive evidence. It must have taken thousands of years to discover the simple fact of sharpening the stone, but his intelligence was very elementary then.

This diagram is a reconstruction of the first human ancestor
To use *stone tools*.
The closest living relatives of humans are
Gorillas and chimpanzee.

House:

The risk factor still emerged. Catching deer was a herculean task. Hunting bears and tigers involved risk. Then he was struck with an idea that he could hide behind a tree and kill his prey with the help of a bamboo stick and an arrow.

The invention of **bow** was an outstanding triumph a million years ago..! Simultaneously he discovered that he could tie the animal skin to protect his feet. For more comfort he inserted green leaves as a cushion. Later it developed into a '**shoe**'.

Animals stay near water base. Humans do not have protective thick skin like animals. They had to live in caves and move across in search of food, and had to return to the caves on the hill tops again.

Necessity led to another invention. Observing the nests and snake pits he erected sticks, covered them with leaves and named it **'house'**. He did not know how to illuminate the interiors, tried to remove the roof tops that worked perfectly till the rains troubled. Accidentally a piece of wall might have broken and a ray entered in, leading to the invention of window, but the problem was unwanted visitors like Pythons and Hyenas. He covered it with animal hides. Of course the glass was invented in due course.

On a rainy day he found a stone rolling down from the mountains. '*Why do only round-shaped stones roll*?' he was surprised. Without the knowledge of 'Centre of gravity' he invented the **wheel**.

Invention of wheel opened another new chapter..!

'**Salt'** was another discovery. He learnt to cook 'Biryani' (in Persian bi-r-yani means 'Fried before cooking') then hot pizzas and cool custards. Coffee was discovered in Ethiopia 1400 years ago. Taste and Beauty became a part of living. He discovered that turmeric glorifies the face. Leonardo Da Vinci designed the 'scissors' for haircut.

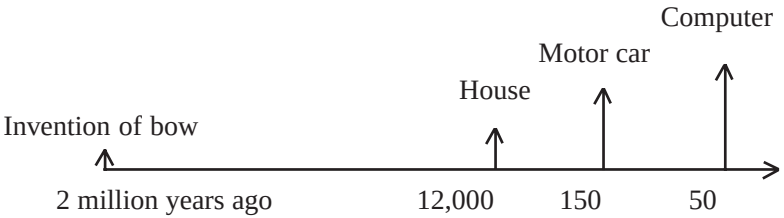
Thus human anthropology evolved around 'desire'..! A desire-less person can be either a philosopher or an animal.

The mental growth:

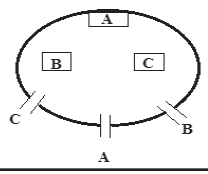
Seed a thought now. It grows into a tree. The chances of draught or cyclone are only ten per cent. If you don't sow a seed, the chances of getting the reward are zero per cent. Mankind believed this.

'Drilling oil from earth? Just impossible' said people in 1860s. 'Telephone can never be a mode of communication', was the opinion in 1870. 'Computers may weigh more than 1.5 tons' said a scientist in 1950s. Even Bill gates said in 1981 that 640K ought to be enough. Cell phones began with ONE G, and in no time 3G ushered in faster data-transmission speeds. By the time you complete reading this book, no wonder if 6th Generation is introduced.

Can you imagine the time-gap between invention of 'arrow' and the 'house'..? Hold your breath. Approximately 19,88,000 years! Yes. Man built the first 'hut'... only 12,000 years ago, whereas arrow was invented two million years ago. All the inventions and discoveries were invented during the past two centuries only.



If you are a student, be aware that the human intelligence has doubled compared to few decades ago. It was enough in those days if you were '*one*' of the best to get a decent job. But now... you should be the 'best' of the best. Do you know that around 60 per cent of graduate students cannot tell name of four rivers flowing in their state, six countries touching our national borders? Try within how much minimum time you can solve this puzzle:



Draw three roads from their houses to their gates satisfying these conditions: 1. The lines should not touch or intersect one another 2. The lines should be within the compound wall 3. No road can pass behind A's house.

Man and rational thinking:

Those were the days when people believed that diseases are caused by evil spirits and to drive them out they used to beat their beloved patient till he became unconscious. In the process many died.

Doctors thought that too much blood caused illness and left leeches on patients to suck extra blood. The surgeons could charge any amount from the wealthy patient, but their hands were chopped off if he died.

It was astonishing that the doctors 500 years ago considered surgery was below their dignity and left it to the 'barbers'.

Ambrose Pare, who was regarded as Father of Surgery was a barber. He was the first to use soothing ointments from plants. Prior to him, surgeons used to place hot iron on the wound to stop bleeding, which was indeed agonisingly painful.

Do you know?

Around 10,000 B.C. holes were drilled in the skull to cure chronic headaches.

The hole was later covered with a stone.

More astonishing was that the patient was wide-awake…

Anaesthesia was not even heard of.

We are leading a more blissful life now. But scientists spent sleepless nights and man struggled hard to attain this comfort. We fought distressing polio, horrifying chickenpox and disgusting Tuberculosis. By the next decade we may discover ways to eradicate cancer and AIDS. Post cards and telegrams are gone. Bullock carts found place in museums. Internet and jet flights made the world global. Again the same conclusion… dreams!

A blind lady approached a saint for an advice. 'Do your duty visualising your destiny' he told her. The lady was hesitant, 'But I am born blind'. Saint consoled her compassionately 'Being blind is fate, not destiny. Accept it, decide the goal and work for it'.

Few words with a profound meaning..! People complaining about failures should decide their destinies, but not ways to support their fate. You are the painter of your future. *Write your future dairy now.* Imagine 70 years into the future. How do you want to feel about your past? Fulfilled… happy… satisfied to the fullest… with no regrets…?

Do you dream?

Do you have a burning desire topping your class? Be the C.E.O of a multinational by the age of 35…? Own a BMW? Be in show business? Want to be an astronaut..? Want to shake hands with a top movie star in a party hosted by the President of India ?

Are your desires strong? Are you the type of person who wants to experience as many varieties of your liking as possible? If tea is your love, have you tasted lemon tea, ice tea, black tea, Chinese tea; or if you like ice creams, varieties like fried ice cream, Waffle cone, Sundaes, Jellies, Soft fantasies, hot coffee, Blueberry, Cuban Coffee with Dolce de Leech, Honey-Lavender Ricotta, Sour and Chamomile Cream?

Ever thought of totally engrossed in painting, music or bird watching? How about sitting on a riverbank with a close friend conversing in deep silence? When did you see the full moon? When did you last sleep under an open sky? These productive desires cost nothing but stimulate energies. Not being able to identify own positive 'bliss points' is the most unfortunate thing in life.

A poor man may sleep comfortably on a footpath. A rich man may be restless in an air-conditioned room. That does not mean that people need not wish for air conditioners.

Comfort may not be the ultimate, but certainly is relaxing.

Unlike ancient seers, modern philosophers don't live in recluse. They try to enhance levels of their own contentment..!

Contentment is different from *laziness*. A person, who is comfortably contended, should have five qualities.

1. No inclination for extra comforts other than present possessions.
2. Not envious of people having more fame, money and power.
3. No insecurity about the future.
4. No uncertainty about future relationships and bonds.
5. Confident about spending the future without a feel of boredom.

People say 'life is short'. No. We wait long to begin and hurry to end it early. We don't cultivate the habit of working from early age, and then start working for survival.

The rest house theory:

When we don't have interest in our job, we are eager to stop the journey at the earliest and feel fortunate watching others experiencing the pains of 'performing'. But who is happier? Viewer or performer..? Buddha calls a man foolish, not if he is ignorant but if he is unconscious.

A cricketer earns five millions for playing a match whereas we 'pay' five hundred rupees to the cable operator to watch it. He gets another few millions for acting in an ad. After the shooting, he gets ready for a cosy dinner hosted by the minister of sports along with film stars. After watching the match, we also get ready to watch another serial, realty show or a film star's marriage.

Nothing wrong in watching a match or a marriage in T.V, but develop a parallel interest. You would soon find life more relaxing. Many artists, musicians, painters and singers grew in the same fashion. They developed parallel skills and prospered while working for livelihood. Who knows, you may be the next Ilaya Raja or M.F. Husain. If you have no artistic inclinations, try to be one among first few in your company or organisation.

Nature might not have lauded you with something, but certainly must have blessed with something else. This is positive thinking.

A young boy desired to fight with a mighty wrestler. People ridiculed him as he did not have one hand. One Guru taught and prepared him for the competition. He won the prize.

Overwhelmed by his achievement, he asked his guru how he could do the miracle. Guru smiled, 'Dear son! I taught you a tip called gajabandha. With this art of wrestling, if your opponent has to win over you, he has to catch your right hand and ground you. Your opponent was unsuccessfully searching for it and thus you have won.'

Luck is not somewhere outside. It is the treasure within you to be dug out by the crowbar called *sincerity*. Disappointments should lead to challenges rather than dead-ends.

Anything positive is better than everything negative. Life is like a taxi. The meter ticks on whether we travel or rest. Life is also like a bicycle. The moment we stop pedalling we fall.

We think that *'falling'* is taking rest. No. Rest means halting to take a deep breath and getting ready to move. People construct rest houses at various phases with an erroneous thinking that they are happy to retire, or have nothing further to do, or that they have no energy. Here are various reasons to build such houses.

Rest house at success: At the age of twenty-two, when my first play was enacted before few hundred spectators, I was on top of the world. I travelled at my own cost to watch the performance wherever it was staged just to enjoy the applause. I constructed a rest house at my *success*. I realised this after two years, started writing again and soon won Sahitya Academy Award for my fourth play.

At confusion: People keep the dream box under their pillow and sleep. Sleeping to dream is different from awakening to work. Standing at cross-roads, these people never start anything under the pretext of 'not able to decide.' After finishing graduation and to avoid the brand name 'unemployed', many young boys and girls come to city, stay in hostels under the pretext of 'learning computer courses', which they could have done while studying itself.

At pain and anguish: People withdraw in the name of *Karma* when they face a distress like death of a spouse or child, without realising that work is the antidote for anguish. They do not comprehend that for God to support us, we should at least start working.

At the Target: You may be confused as what is wrong in constructing a rest house at the final target. No. People like Louis Pasteur and Vinoba Bhave never rested in their guest houses. They worked till last breath and died young in their eighties.

At Failure*:* I worked with a producer for two successful films. Later, his three films were flops. He retired from the field. Nothing wrong..! But he got addicted to drugs and died at forty. I know another successful contractor who lost heavily in the share market and never recovered from the shock to continue any other business.

At distress: Many fiction writers retired when the reading habit of people dropped to its low due to the influence of TV. I continued to write, but there were no takers. At this juncture, my two directorial ventures bombed. Other directors ceased calling me for discussions. Suddenly I became a fish out of water. I constructed a rest house at my distress. Playing cards, booze and gossip became my routine.

Those two years were the worst phase of my life. I realised the reasons for drop in sales. People were not willing to spend money on 'read and throw' fiction. They could as well get the book for a day on rent and with that amount (cost of the book) watch more and better pulp serials in TV for a 'whole month'.

Apprehending this I wanted to write something *worthy* that they would 'purchase', read and keep; or gift it to others. I worked on a book for two years and it paid dividends. More than two lakh copies were sold. It is the original version of the book you are holding now.

After penning a few P.D books, I realised I can motivate people through lectures. Like many writers I was also an introvert. Stage fear was my problem. But I practiced and it was an instant success. Then there was an offer from THE HINDU to write a column. Writing for the prestigious daily known for its unique standard was the best opportunity of my life. But I am a fiction writer in Telugu. Thinking in a colloquial language and translating it into English is not effective. I am also not very good at English and am still improving. But I could sustain the pressure and now one among the few contributors writing a column for the daily since four years.

Spielberg became the best commercial bet with 'Indiana Jones', but his critics were never willing to recognise his artistic talent. To wipe off this image, he made 'The Colour Purple' that was nominated for eleven Oscars but did not win a single award. By this time, he was the most popular director in the world, claiming 30 million dollars for a film. With a thirst for critical acclamation as a 'good' director, than a 'popular' one, he made an epic 'E.T.', which was unfortunately over-ruled by 'Gandhi' in the race. He went into depression but came out quickly and made 'Jurassic park' and 'Schindler's List'. They won him 10 Oscars including best film and best director.

The closer you get to the zenith,
The more you find there is no 'pinnacle'.
It is continuous development
Called 'self-change'

SELF CHANGE

CHANGE IS INEVITABLE.
BETTERMENT IS OPTIONAL.

Suppose you are on a sinking *Titanic*, need not sacrifice for any heroine or hero and hence can swim to a gorgeous island with waterfalls, mountains and peacocks. You have a variety of fruits and can feast on of *Rabbit–65* or *Deer Manchuria.* Will you stay there or come back?

If your answer is 'come back' then the next question is 'what is here that is not there?' Your answer would be 'my people, comforts, and wisdom'.

Do you remember that these are the same *aiswaryas* that we discussed at the beginning of this book? We rush to return from the island *(even though everything is free there*) to labour hard, struggle with problems and tensions to acquire those six aiswaryas.

A writer would have only one story. He either adds drama, or cuts the comedy and enhances the suspense while narrating it to the director or hero in accordance with their taste. Similarly you have only one life and have to mend your ways according to your goals. Adopt a different style to achieve each *aiswarya*. Practice running if you want to be a sprinter; practice public speaking to be a politician and study well to become a scholar..!

This is self-change..! Sometimes we should be prepared for unexpected changes as well. It is like keeping an alternate arrangement when a wedding is planned in rainy season in the open yard. Thus our future is created on two realities:

A. Our past experiences that taught us 'lessons' at each stage.
B. Our present beliefs and emotions.

We can neither change our past, nor amend the inevitable. The only thing we can do is to keep playing on the one string we have, that is our '*present'*. Fortunately we have control over it for a better future. Future persistently bestows new responsibilities on us. When a person becomes a parent, he may educate his child or become addict to vices leaving the responsibility to his wife. Thus *Change is inevitable, but betterment is optional.*

Self-criticism vs. Self-regard:

'No one can make you feel inferior without your consent' said Eleanor Roosevelt, a crippled former U.S. President. Self-change includes both 'Regard' and 'Disapproval' of self. *Disapproval* is looking for the areas where you can develop. *Self-regard* is feeling good about yourself in spite of your unavoidable defects.

When you are in a bad situation, don't worry. It will change. When you are in a good situation don't worry that it will change.*

Change should lead to maturity. Maturity is not an inborn gift but your choice. As a kid, you don't know that bicycling requires balancing. You learn; fall down often, but still practice. Then cautiously drive. Now? Cycling has become so casual that you don't think about balancing. Thus maturity develops through 4 stages.

1. Ignorance of incompetance :

You are ignorant that you require it. Suppose you are a writer but readers are not purchasing your books, or you want to be an actor but directors are not offering you roles. You don't know the reason. You are in dark that your books are beyond comprehension for your readers. Or as an *art film actor*, you are not able to move facial muscles in close up shots. At this stage you are in a state of total blissful ignorance. But ignorance is not always bliss.

> *Many times we are ignorant of our inabilities. People say… 'I am not aware that I cannot run for more than a hundred yards at a stretch as I never tried. I never knew that I cannot talk when girls are around me. I don't know that my communication skills play vital role in my interviews.'*

Incompetence is of two types: First type is: You don't know that you need it. When you are novice to script writing, you don't know that a screenplay normally comprises of 60-120 scenes. While learning driving, you don't know that you have to press the clutch while changing gears. You also don't know that high-tech cars don't have clutches; and you need not press accelerator where the electronic speed control system is in operation.

Second type of incompetence is: You believe that you have it. You are overconfident about your 'non-existent' skills. When your self-reliance exceeds your abilities you skyrocket your vehicles, fail to synchronise between steering and brake and end up in accident; drown in deep waters overestimating your swimming capabilities; lose in shares overestimating your share market knowledge. But you cannot move on to the second stage unless you recognise your overconfidence, ignorance and incompetence, and that is called 'experience'.

2. Knowledge of incompetance:

In second stage, you know that you have to operate the clutch while changing gears, but don't know how to handle them. You are suddenly aware of how much you have to learn. You find that there are others far more competent than you and realise that you need more skills and practice. Your strengths are tested, confidence drops, you go through an uncomfortable period, dumb and discouraged. Conscious incompetence is seeding of Jnana. Once you identify your incompetence, the time to master your skill depends on your stimulus to learn. The more your stimulus the fast you learn.

> *When my first play, a mediocre melodrama was a success, I felt there was nothing else to learn. But when I read Samuel Beckett's tragicomedies* WAITING FOR GODOT *and* ENDGAME*, watched Ionesco's absurd plays* CHAIRS *and* LESSON*, Eugene O'Neill's expressionistic play* BEYOND THE HORIZON*, I realised how novice I am at theatre. I became conscious of my incompetence, worked on modern theatre and wrote expressionistic play 'A* MAN CALLED DOG*', black comedy 'DAMMIT', and an absurd play 'THE SILENCE BETWEEN YOU AND ME'.*

Sometimes the incompetent also taste success but this is temporary. Many new directors work on a single script for years and put everything on it. They rush to make the next film after the successful first venture without working on the next script adequately. The result is that they fail and vanish.

Successful people realise that creativity is like a reservoir to be filled up after drawing water from it.

3. Developing competence:

As you gain experience you become more competent. Your skills are adequate to manage your job. At this stage, do not stop learning with 'it's enough' feeling, or do not let your competence turn into overconfidence. Many people stop enhancing their skills at this stage where they are not the master of the job but could just manage their work.

A person does not realise the importance of English during college days (ignorance of incompetence). After attending interviews, he realises its value (knowledge of incompetence). He joins the spoken English course, learns to speak (Conscious knowledge), manages in interviews, and talks simple English though not fluently.

4. Unconscious operation:

Once you get into the habit of success, your confidence and abilities are at their peak. You use these techniques unknowingly. It is called 'auto-pilot' functioning and multi-tasking.

A budding cricketer learns to cut, drive and pull. During the process he masters the skill. Later he unconsciously pulls, drives or cuts even when the ball zooms at him at 100 miles per hour. This is unconscious competence.

The person starts conversing only in English and over a period speaks without fumbling. It is like talking with friends while driving, unmindful of clutch and gear. He is totally matured in his field now.

Temptations:

A person can be euphoric while rolling on the steps of a temple or getting intoxicated in a Ganza house. A *positive* or *negative* emotion at its peak is called 'Bliss'. The latter is harmful and is called 'temptation'. A luring desire is called temptation.

Maturity includes not yielding to *immediate* and *harmful* pleasures. Delaying sometimes offers greater benefits than getting tempted for immediate gratification. Animals, with the exception of ants and few other creatures opt for immediate reward.

Let's try to be more intelligent than them. Keep away from the following temptations. It appears hard to implement a few restraints, but once accustomed, you will find more happiness in avoiding a temptation rather than succumbing to it.

ONE: IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION LEADING TO PERMANENT LOSS: Teasing a friend to an extent that he/she feels tired of your company. Teasing gives temporary happiness but losing a friend is grief.

TWO: TEMPORARY TEMPTATIONS AT THE COST OF BETTER BENEFITS: Spending money as soon as you get it, than saving it for important commitments; Not being able to postpone a film till holidays; Unable to wait to buy a mobile when the prices are coming down.

THREE: POSTPONING UNPLEASANT WORK, RISTING A FUTURE PROBLEM: Not going to the doctor to have an incessant cough checked; Feeling lazy to wear a sweater on a winter night and catching cold.

FOUR: IMMEDIATE PLEASURES THAT TROUBLE IN THE LONG RUN: Coffee is paired with satisfaction, cigarettes with relaxation, alcohol with fun and nail biting with relief of anxiety. Once hooked to them, the body craves for these relaxants. Heavy smokers feel depressed and on that *pretext* they smoke the next cigarette.

FIVE: EVADING A RESPONSIBILITY AND MISSING OUT A FUTURE BENEFIT: Not studying well during college days and later living with small salary; Not developing communication skills for a good job.

We all get upset sometimes, but few people are cynical always saying, '*This is rubbish… None can alter my fate…'* They complain on economy, social systems and curse having born in this country, or even in this world for petty issues like trains running late, electricity failure and even for a loss of a cricket match,. They are called 'infectors' in whose company we become cynics as well.

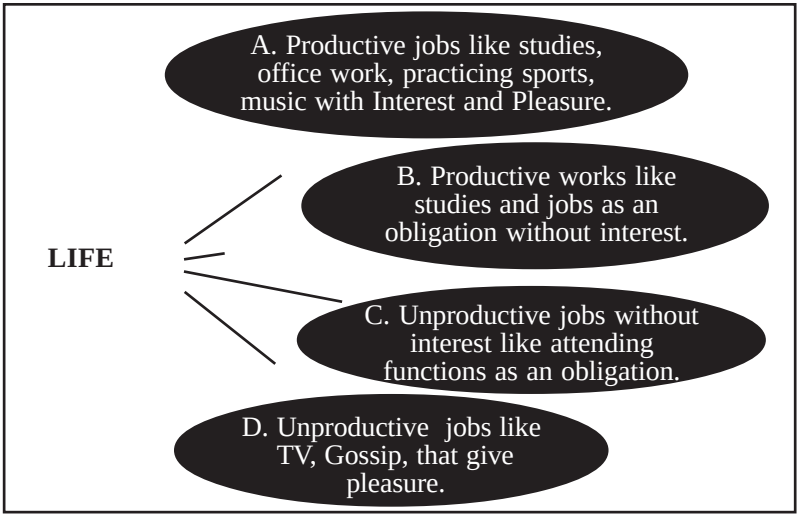
Spice up your life. People with lack of enthusiasm prolong their lives without realising the difference between *breathing* and *living.* 'I am happy if the day passes without any worry' is the kind of routineness that kills a man's passion. Are you just killing time or enjoying? Life becomes insipid unless a fresh enthusiasm overflows every morning. Get excited when you wake up in the morning, "If I were to die today, would I do what I am about to do?"

Pessimism, depression and cynicism:

'How are you?'
'Just getting on…'
'Why are you worried?'
'I don't see the reason…"
'Why are you always serious?'
'It is my nature'
'Why did you quarrel with him?'
'Just happened like that.'

A cynic does nothing except reminises past bad experiences; and the pessimist with a bad experience is just waiting for the disaster and A depressed fellow does not move in spite of possible positive future.

We spend our time on interesting, productive (but boring) and fruitless (but interesting) jobs with *varying proportions*. Successful people make an effort to increase the space marked A below, try to shift activities from B to A, cut on C and eliminate total D.


A. Productive jobs like studies, office work, practicing sports, music with Interest and Pleasure.
B. Productive works like studies and jobs as an obligation without interest.
LIFE
C. Unproductive jobs without interest like attending functions as an obligation.
D. Unproductive jobs like TV, Gossip, that give pleasure.

Surviving is receiving. Living is giving. Again, giving should not be construed as a responsibility. It should be your selfless passion.

The following factors will keep cynicism at bay.

1. Will Power Leverage: Unlike animals we have a choice in picking up our *priorities* and *friends*. However we become casual keeping our escape routes open. Never put up an argument to support your lethargy. Once you are willing, the 'zeal' generates the willpower.

Take the example of Sudha Chandran who met with an accident resulting in the amputation of her right leg. She holds Master's degree in economics, became one of the most accomplished dancers of India. Stephan Hawking is another example. You can take such umpteen examples from physically challenged and terminally ill people like Patrick Swayze (Dirty Dancing fame) who said, 'every moment is precious when death is near'.

2. Mental Health*:* Health or illness, joy or grief depends on our thinking, eating, sleeping and other habits. Mental ill-health in adults may be due to genes, financial troubles, other problems and vices. Mental ill-health in children develops due to bad parenting. The child gets frustrated when he can't rise up to his parent's expectations. Later he wants to prove his identity, unfortunately more on the negative side with drinks, hukka, rash driving etc.

Every human being balances between pain and pleasure. We derive pleasure through release of positive endorphins in enjoyable situations like getting a rank or a promotion; or in exciting experiences like roller coaster ride or a bungee jump. Negative endorphins also give us pleasure in *hallucinogens* (LSD and Hashish), *drugs* (Cocaine and Alcohol), and *downers* (Ganza and Morphine).

Good mental health is realising the real thrill in genuine success. Almost everyone has his/her ideal personalities like film stars, cricketers, politicians and pop singers. But some of them unfortunately evince *peak of mental ill-health* by tattooing their names and faces. They are mad enough to even die for them. Again the same concept, anchoring pleasure to unproductive habits..!

Every cigarette smoker knows that smoking is bad. Why does he not quit? Because smoking represents pleasure and quitting represents pain. The only way to stop smoking is to anchor *pain* to the habit and *pleasure* to quitting.

3. HEALTH: If there are five steps to *enjoy* life, the first is HEALTH. Those who suffer from rheumatism, arthritis, backache, migraine and vain to wail, 'God has given me this! What can I do at this stage and age?' should get confidence from these people:

- S.N. Oscar of Sweden participated in Olympics shooting at 72.
- Goethe completed his book '**FAST**' at his 80th year.
- Don Pedro played on stage 'Othello' in his 80th year.
- Commodore added from his 14th new venture a *hundred million* to his property between the age of 70 and 83.
- Georgia O'Keeffe sketched the largest painting of the world 'FLOWERS AND THE DESERT' at the age of 98.

4. AGE: The President and Prime Minister walk three kilometres a day and shake hands with a minimum of hundred people. How could they do it so cheerfully at the age of eighty? It is their passion. Youthfulness at 70 is bliss; and to be old at 30 is a curse. Think of people who retire at thirty. Analyse the reasons. A famous Telugu Poet says 'Age is to the body, and not to the thought. Some youth are born old…'

Age certainly leads to obesity and hair loss. Middle age shows up in the middle (of the body). With little exercise you can keep young. Psychiatrists confirm that just like woman, men also have psychological menopause (agony of losing youthfulness). Youthfulness is a magnet. For that reason children grow moustaches and the old colour their hair. Benjamin, the philosopher suggests a way:

> *Although 'm aging, I am happy that some part of my life is still remaining. If my past is a beautiful bunch of emotions, my future is most enthusiastic. If my past taught me how to run, future teaches me happiness in walking. If my past is a mixture of honey and resentment, I enjoy the sweetness now, because I learnt to extract sweetness from bitterness. My experience told me that if I rightly lived, really lived and climaxed in life, I would never be afraid of death. It is a benediction and a peaceful rest.*

Instead of worrying about the unavoidable ageing, cover it with overwhelming accomplishments. *Overshadow deficiency with your proficiency.* S*hort* Napoleon, *unhealthy* Gandhi, *polio*-affected Roosevelt, *frail* Mother Teresa are great examples..!

5. Beauty: We cannot help wrinkles and scars under eyes, but can make our zeal illuminate them with passion. They are the indicators of yester years' smile. Be proud of them. Age wrinkles the skin but lack of gusto wrinkles the soul. Be beautiful with neat dress code, good manners disciplined life style etc. SERIOUSNESS IS THE WORST COSMETIC AND DEPRESSION IS THE UGLIEST MAKE-UP. Beauty-consciousness dilutes self-belief.

A 4' 5" tall boy, when not selected for a job, endorsed his failure to his height and committed suicide. In another case, a woman with three children was very normal looking. Her handsome husband was a lecturer in a women's college. She found girls seeking his attention. Her complex grew to the extent that she started conversing with strangers by phone. Everyone was attracted by her melodious voice but drifted away after meeting her. Meanwhile her husband came to know about it and divorced her. In another example a young man visits physicians with the complaint that his nose is too big. Surgeons refused to operate saying that it is fine, but he blames their calibre to perform the complicated operation.

This syndrome is called 'Extreme body Dysmorphic disorder'. People with such physique consciousness spend time checking in mirrors, avoid social interactions and often seek cosmetic remedies.

Youthfulness is everybody's right, but beauty is few people's virtue. We become uglier and older rapidly because we inject bad blood into ourselves continuously. The moment we wake up the thought of worries and disturbed relations haunt us. At the work place we take a shot of some more corrupt blood. In the evening we go out for dinner with our spouse or friends, talk bad about relatives, neighbours, their new riches, losses; filmy people, their affairs; and every thing that exists on earth. After stimulating ourselves with cheap toxins thoroughly, we come home and sleep, not before watching TV and instilling further corrupt blood about the lousy world around us comprising of politics, mafia, crime and kids dancing to item songs.

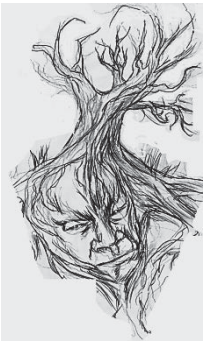
How can we stay beautiful then? See uncorrupted people who pray unselfishly, for whom work is worship, smile is pure and eyes are plain. If you can dance like a kid silently within you, tensions and misery which had hither to become part of you wars off slowly. When something starts flowing from within you… some grace and a feel of satisfaction, then your eyes will start shining with joy; your face will be luminous with gleam glory.

Developing individuality:

Do your friends make you a scape goat cracking jokes? Compelled to watch a movie of their choice? Never allow to convey your opinion..? Then you have a feeble person within you.

Religion and traditions hug us at cradle and leave us only at cremation. Elders on the other side are ready to dominate and teach us their own theories. However we can still have our individuality. It is a great achievement *to be yourself* in a world that always tries to make you something else.

For people to respect you, you should be either *clever* or *appear intelligen*t; be *reserved* or a *good conversationalist*. The more knowledgeable you are, the more confident you become and in turn more of an individual. Read good material, keep learning, develop strong views and thus improve your personal *skill-set*.



To impress others with your talk, be equipped with verses from vernacular language, simple mathematical puzzles, science, geography, politics, sports, current affairs etc. Make yourself familiar with Phylum Protozoa to Chordates, skating to polo, Archimedes to Arthur Clark, Newton's laws to Einstein theories, Israel's concerns to Palestinian settlement, Islamic fundamentalism, Hollywood news, Chechnya's mutiny, India's economic policies, achievements in the field of DNA etc. It empowers you to be a participant, rather than being a mere spectator..!

To be an 'individual' don't be overawed by top celebrities, cine personalities or spiritual leaders. You may like their acting, preaching and principles, but resist becoming their *blind* disciple.

A selfish Baba may advice you to renounce the world leaving your family and follow him. He is just seeing a good P.R.O in you. A political leader may encourage you to break glass-windows of buses for 'his' cause. When government increases the fares to compensate the losses, he asks you to break them again. Following a good preacher is not wrong, but losing logical senses is not 'individuality'.

A king asked his minister, 'When a bride is stepping into her in-law's house, if an angel offers a boon to her what is the best wish she can opt for'. The minister couldn't answer. "Tell me by tomorrow morning, or you will be beheaded" the king said.

The minister was sleepless. Noticing his father wandering at midnight his son enquired the reason. He was aghast about the stupid king's doubt. His love for his father made him restless. He could not stay at home, rode his horse aimlessly and by dawn reached woods. There he found an ugly beggar girl near a temple on a small hill top. She asked the reason for his worry. On knowing the king's doubt, she said she would tell the answer, provided he married her. The boy loved his father so deep that he immediately accepted her proposal without any hesitation.

Both went to the king's court yard. The girl said, "Raja..! Any girl would love to have her 'self-respect' till death, either in her house or with her in-laws. If I am the bride, I would request the angel, 'Let my individuality prevail at my in-laws house also'. I believe that losing individuality is worse than death."

The crowd clapped. The king was also satisfied, but the minister was reluctant to accept his son's marriage with an ugly beggar. But his resolved son was determined to marry her on the spot. The king arranged for their wedding then and there.

To their amazement an angel descended from the skies, "I am happy with your commitment" she praised the minister's son. "I want to bestow a boon. I make your fiancée the most beautiful woman in the world for 'half' of the day. Choice is yours. Do you want her appear lovely and attractive in the 'day-time' so that she can be by your side for public engagements or in the night in solitude?" she asked.

The crowd was eagerly waiting for his answer. He said, "My fiancée said that any girl wishes her individuality to be maintained even after marriage. Who am I to decide when she should be beautiful? Let her decide by herself." The crowd rose to its feet and gave a thundering applause. Extremely pleased with his answer, the angel made the girl pretty permanently.

Each of us is a dissimilar blueprint of nature with different competence (or incompetence). Try to fit into a frame where you can handle things well. This is one way of protecting your individuality. If you are not good in your profession, you are prone to heckling.

If you are not creative but authoritative, be in administration (like IAS, politics and teaching) rather than choosing a creative profession (film direction, designing and graphics). If you lack concentration and patience, you would be failure as a doctor or software professional. Don't prefer to work with public (Railway enquiries, BPOs etc.) if you are short tempered.

Lessons from Mahabharata:

Mahabharata is the *second* longest epic of the world (first being King Gesar) written around 3000 BC. It has mind-blowing revelations about Astronomy (existence of Uranus and Neptune), Mathematics (Numbers to the range of 10 raised to the powers of 16) Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Spirituality and Politics. It teaches many lessons about life.

1. Pandavas were keen to stop the bloodshed just for five villages. *Lesson: Let your motto be good and genuine.*

2. Kauravas created new enemies invading neighbours, whereas Pandavas utilised the time to acquire strengths. *Lesson: Utilise leisure time to strengthen your* skills

3. The allies of Kauravas were just verbose. Pandavas had the support of Drupada by marrying Draupadi; Arjuna married serpent queen Uloochi and Subhadra sister of Krishna, Bheema weded Rakshasa empress Hidimbi and Sahadeva (Magadha), Nakula (Chedi). *Lesson: Make powerful friends, not gossip mongers. Build up strong connections, of course not through polygamy.*

4. There were many sympathisers for Pandavas in Kauravas army. *Lesson: Individual interests should never exceed team interest.*

5. Dharmaraja went over to the opposite side to seek the elder's blessings. They unfolded important secrets how to defeat them. *Lesson: Understand the ground realities and plan strategies.*

6. Krishna the greatest crisis manager was on their side. *Lesson: Take advice from learned people.*

King Gesar is a living epic of Tibet. This 12th century classic about the fearless King Gesar is considered the longest literary work in the world. Its compilation has some 120 volumes, containing over 20 million words in more than one million verses.

Suggestions vs. Decisions:

We don't have a person of Krishna's calibre to give suggestions in our crisis. But our friends, relatives, neighbours, driver and even our maids are ready to pour out suggestions.

Whether to take own decision or to depend on other's advice is *wisdom*. A counsellor can help you to think positively and develop better ways of coping. This is on the positive side.

On the other side, people go to counsellors without realising that many problems can be solved only with self-discretion. "My husband is a boozer; my in-laws are not cordial; my husband loves another lady; I could not concentrate on studies since my girlfriend is roaming with another guy; I don't want to marry any other man, as I am unable to forget my boy-friend who is now married but wants to continue 'friendship' with me… I want to come up in life but…" What suggestion can a counsellor give for these problems?

Take each of the above problems and think of a solution. You yourself would certainly get four to five answers for each problem. In that way problems can be divided into four categories.

1. The problems that have no solutions.
2. The counselling is required to someone else, not you.
3. It can be solved by you and you don't require a counsellor.
4. The problems that require a counsellor.

Talking to someone confidentially who is not a friend or family member can certainly make the difference. Counselling encourages distressed people to explore their feelings and problems. But many people who consult counsellors do not know whether they have to approach a psychologist or a psychiatrist.

Talk freely. Be sure that he knows about the problem as much as you do. Otherwise he deals with your problem at micro level only. Ask your friend to count the number of paragraphs and then ask him about the heading of the chapter. He cannot answer. He is concerned with counting paragraphs only. Same with the counsellor also. It can be explained better with the following humorous example:

Client : My husband is a boozer. What shall I do?
Psy : Give him Mouth wash after the booze.
Cli : (angry) I came for a suggestion. How to stop him?
Psy : Oh. I am sorry. I thought otherwise..! Bring him. What we both can do in his absence?
Cli : Can't I alone change him?
Psy : I don't think so. He is happy with his drinks. You are not happy with him. He won't change. You have to change. Or bring him, we can try counselling him or send him to a rehabilitation centre.
Cli : He would neither come here nor go there.
Psy : (silent… *what can I do)*
Cli : He beats me after drinking. What shall I do?
Psy : Beat him back again.
Cli : Are you joking?
Psy : I mean, beat him psychologically. Know his weakness. Why he is addicted to drinks? Threaten him that you will commit suicide or tell your parents.
Cli : I told them. They said, 'Stay with him or die. We can't help'. Our house has become virtually a hell. Jail would be better.
Psy : *(Then kill him and go to jail, if it is better).*
Cli : My in-laws are also harassing me. They stay in an apartment next to us. After twenty years of marriage, they still want something from my parents.
Psy : Give a police complaint. With that threat, he may at least stop beating you. There are two options: Live with him or leave him. Can you try for his transfer?
Cli : No. His is a stationary job.
Psy : Be brave.
Cli : That is what I am asking you. How to be brave?
Psy : Can you stay away from him for some time with your kids… I mean… a small job for some time.
Cli : He will be happier with that. (Disgusted) Your fees..?
Psy : No. Thank you. I haven't given any solution or suggestion.

"My son is not studying well" says the mother. "Keep him away from Television, mobile, movies and internet" suggests the counsellor. The satisfied mother pays the fees and goes. She knows she can never implement it. A girl asks, "I loved a boy. My father will get heart attack if I tell him that. What shall I do?" The counsellor says, "You would have thought of the consequences before loving. Now decide between the two." Does she not know that much? Many clients go to counsellors not for the solution, but to pour out their miseries. Psychoanalyst Dale Carnegie wrote his experience: "A lady took one hour appointment and started unfolding her problem. After fifty-nine minutes I said that we are left with only one minute. 'Let me talk for that minute also doctor' she said."

It is not degrading counsellors or clients. People in problems also know the way-outs. But they can neither take a decision nor implement it. They want to listen to it from horse's mouth. A good counsellor never gives solutions but suggests alternatives and gives confidence.

Be careful from pseudo-psychologists and hypnotists. Take advice from your doctor whether you require counselling or psychotherapy. Treatments generally fall into three categories: Psycho-analytical therapies on cognitions and behaviours; psychodynamic therapies on the unconscious relationship patterns evolved from childhood; and Humanistic therapies. This is just a generalisation. Keep in mind four points.

1. There is no tailor-made solution for any problem.
2. You should be strong to implement the suggestions.
3. Marital problems are to be solved with both the parties.
4. You cannot change overnight.

A patient went to a psychiatrist complaining that he died yesterday. The doctor was shocked but being familiar with this type of patients, asked him 'Do the dead men bleed?' The patient said 'no'. The doctor pierced a needle into his fore finger and showed him blood and asked him with a sense of achievement 'Now what do you say?' The patient looked at his forefinger and the doctor twice, took a deep breath and said, 'Thank you doctor. Now I understand that even the dead bleed.'

TIME

NOBODY IS BUSY IN THIS WORLD
ONLY THEY HAVE OWN PRIORITES.

Every morning starts with a little smile, a small trouble, an intelligent move and a bit of knowledge… the combination of all making a satisfactory night. It is the definition for a complete day.

Don't complain that you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same 24 hours given to Helen Keller, Leonardo, Louis Pasteur, Michel Angelo, Jefferson and Albert Einstein. We ignore problematic vital issues while addressing trivial matters for temporary pleasure. Discipline is the ability to do things much before they become a compulsion. Things which matter most should never be at the mercy of things that matter least.*

Agatha Christie, Guinnes record holder of best-selling books equal to those of Shakespeare, and whose play "MOUSETRAP" is still running in London since 1952 says "*I plan a book while I do the dishes in the kitchen.*"

A man spends 1/3rd of life in sleep, 1/10th for daily chores; 1/6th with friends travelling and not more than 30% on important tasks. With few changes it can be increased to 50%. The best way to master time management is to evaluate *the hidden drains of time* every day before sleep. If you make an entry of every detail in an imaginary 'time-log book', you would find that only ten per cent of time is spent on the actual work and remaining on socialising, gossiping and on other non-productive tasks. Nothing wrong in socialising, but then don't complain that you don't have time.

Harvey Mackay, author of interesting titles like 'BEWARE OF THE NAKED MAN, WHO OFFERS YOU HIS SHIRT', in his latest book "WE GOT FIRED AND IT IS THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO US", elucidates efficiency ratio of '*Time doing work'* to '*Time spent at work*'. For example if a government employee spends 7 hours on office work that can be completed in 2 to 3 hours, the percentage is around 33. If we dig deeply into our own efficiency ratios, we would be startled to see that for many of us, it never exceeds 60%. As said earlier, it can be enhanced with a small effort and more time sense.

Time sense:

If you incorporate time sense in simple daily chores, you find amazing results in major tasks also. Here is an example.

'Hello.'
'Hello… Is Mr Ram there?' I ask.
The operator wants to know who I am. I tell my name.
'No sir. Is this official?'
'No. I am his friend. When did he go?'
She doesn't reply. May be thinking how it matters.
'When is he expected back?'
The operator says that she has no idea.
'Where has he gone?'
'He didn't tell'
'Being an executive, doesn't he know that he should leave a note about his whereabouts?'

She is silent, may be thinking that being a writer I should write a book on executive management, instead of preaching the receptionist. She breaks the silence.

'Any message, sir'
'I told him to carry a cell phone. Doesn't he?'
'No. He doesn't carry any.'
'Please tell him to call me back.'
'Who is speaking?' (By that time she forgets my name.)
'I'm Veerendranath speaking'
'May I know from where?'
Controlling my irritation I say, 'I told you, I am his friend.'
'Okay sir. I'll tell him. Any message sir..?'
'Tell him to carry a cell phone'.

The operator is silent. This time she may be contemplating, 'Being his friend you should know better than me'. I disconnect the phone.

The same conversation can be crisp and to the point.

"Is Mr Ram in? I'm his friend Veerendranath speaking" and when I was told that he is not available, I say "Please ask him to return my call. He knows my number." That's it.

How we waste time?

Time management depends on six questions: WHAT I want? WHY I want? WHAT I should do to get what I want? HOW much time do I require for it? WHAT to do if you cannot get it? HOW can this time be utilised for better purpose?

Time is swayed by both myths and lethargy. I am waiting for a good day to start… I would be fresh next day if I sleep early today… The weather is pleasant and let me enjoy… I am too sensitive and hence not able to say 'no' when people interrupt me… I don't compromise on work… I am a perfectionist and hence feel that even important tasks can wait.

'Time flies' they say. No. It stays. We pass it. Spending time is of three types: Gloomy, Routine and Pleasant. How do you feel when you look back at the end of the day? People who are not passionate with their work say 'just another day'.

Be a dictator to sever your 'time consuming' unproductive habits..! Excess sleep is one. The Bible says: 'Do not love sleep. It makes you poor; if you are awake you can get a loaf'. We sleep at least two hours more than what is required. Unlike children, we spend more time in trying to get sleep.

If you are facing paucity of time, start saving it from the morning chores. Save time in breakfast. Shave in the night if you have to leave early in the morning. Some people start daily chores only after reading the entire newspaper. Such things might be ok to people who are settled or retired in life, but not for those who are in the process of ascending the five steps.

You find more time when stimulated with the task. Do you remember waking up early with excitement on the day of journey to your grandpa's village… a cricket match where you represent your school… a train journey for attending your cousin's wedding..!

When you plan a task that requires compulsory waiting (like taking a certificate at a government office), be equipped to deal with them without fretting. Allocate some buffer time and engage in some other work. It is like working on your laptop while waiting outside an official's cubical.

Wastage of time revolves around 6 doctrines. A critical scrutiny would tell that you can overcome them with a little effort.

1. **Attractions and avoidance:** Spending more time on what heart (Id) tempts than what the mind (Super ego) suggests.

You are four to five kilos extra than what you should be and also notice that you are gaining weight slowly. Your 'super-ego' suggests to cut down sweets and junk food; and also go for morning walk. When you pass by a Chat Bhandar, your 'Id' says to stop there to eat (for the last time). When the alarm bell rings to announce the morning-walk-time, it says 'from tomorrow'. Keeping 'Id' is super-ego's control is called "Nirvana" about which we will discuss later in this chapter.

2. Encroachment by others: Interruptions from others are part of life, but you can manage many of them *diplomatically* without hurting relations. Encroachments are two types: With your consent, or as an obligation. Develop tact in closing a call, saying 'Thanks. I will be in touch… call you later…'

Suppose your friend gossips too much, keep Ben Johnson's quote on your wall, 'People talk of killing time, while time quietly kills them'. Your sane friend would get the meaning of it.

3. Being busy: Five reasons for being busy are: 1. Inability to prioritise the task. 2. Failure to finish the tasks in order of priority. 3. Taking up another interesting unimportant assignment in the middle. 4. Lack of discipline to complete the job. 5. Being lazy, waking up late etc. We believe that the last reason is the culprit. No. The first is the reason.

A mother calls her son to help her in the kitchen. The boy, engaged in net-chat yells, "I am busy". Meanwhile his girlfriend calls him. He apologises his friend and converses with her.

In the meantime he receives call from a budding heroine, appreciating his poem on Facebook. He switches on to her. Disturbing him, his friend's father calls to tell him about his selection for the under–22 state team. He will say, 'I will call you later…' either to the heroine or cricket board personal, depending on his interest.

This is the concept of being busy.

4. Influence by others: Others influence your mental encoding, rational thinking and design your desires. It is such an indirect persuasion that we don't even know that we are being influenced.

> *The splashes of shampoo water on the silky hair, colourful slices of tomatoes falling in a slow motion on the steaming pizzas, the secrets of cricketer's energy and the film star's sky dive to catch his favourite cool drink… lure us. They make even luxurious products a 'necessity'. The new fashioned jeans pull you into the shop; the cinema ads create an irresistible urge to watch and the cell phone advertisements entice you to chat, all combined together damage your time management abilities.*

5. Limited Productive Time : We feel it hard to start the day early particularly in winter. But when you practice it for a week, it becomes your hobby.

> *In the beginning of my career I used to wake up an hour before my departure time. I had to rush my daily chores, get confused and mess up everything. Many a times I missed the bus. The anxiety and the early day stress had heavy bearing on me. I realised my mistake and started waking up one hour further early. Suddenly the entire scenario dramatically changed. I did my jobs at leisure and even had some time to read a book at the bus-stop. Once I was enjoying the morning sleep but later I started enjoying the morning breeze.*

6. Different personality traits: Don't acquire the qualities of these people who waste their (and your) time.

- *Chatters who suffer from diarrhoea of talking*
- *Radicals who kill time with arguments to convince their point.*
- *Gossipmongers trying to get attention by spreading rumours.*
- *Pseudo-intellectuals who try to gain control over you by their shallow knowledge and intelligence.*
- *Over-burdened who do not assign work to prove their worth.*
- *Purists who polish work even though it is not essential.*
- *Pleasers who over-commit to please others.*
- *Perfectionists who spend more time on unimportant tasks.*
- *Egoists who waste time just to satisfy their ego e.g. repairing a fan without skill and failing ultimately.*

Smart time management:

Nobody reaches late to catch a train, attend a marriage or to a movie. Place a task that you have to do compulsorily *on time* at the end. All other tasks before it follow in line. Thus time management is involved around three R's: **R**epetition (making 'hard work' an interesting habit), **R**eward (gifting at the end of each task) and **R**einforcement (satisfaction in completing a work).

If a carrot is placed before a donkey, it keeps on walking… a motivation for lethargic people. Placing a carrot at the end means, rewarding after completion of a job or creating an artificial pressure. Suppose you are to give a lecture the next day morning, but have the habit of writing notes *in the eleventh hour,* plan for an evening show and decide to go only after completing the job.

Intelligence and time management are correlated. Try this puzzle.

> *Pandavas had a narrow escape through a tunnel when the red wax house was burnt by enemies. Only two people could go through it at one time. A torch was a must and they had only one. In other words, as two people come out, one had to take torch in again. To walk through the tunnel Nakula and Sahadeva took 5 minutes each, Arjuna 10, Bhîma 20 and Dharma 25. In how much minimum time they all could come out?*

The answer is simple. With Nakula making four trips with each brother (5+10+20+25) and going back with the torch three times (5 x 3), it would take total 75 minutes. Simple, but can you reduce it further?#

We play several roles like a husband, father, employee etc. Let us assume on a given day a person has the following tasks: His father's death anniversary / His boss asked him to be present in the office by 8 a.m. / His ex-lover in transit wants him to meet her at the airport / He won a gift coupon to have breakfast with his favourite actor. It is his long lasting wish / His friend sent word about a small role in a movie and asked him to go to the studio, another lifelong desire / Watching IPL on TV while playing cards with friends / His friend is hosting a lunch / Sister-in-law's matrimonial arrangements / Other jobs include: Last day to pay electricity bill and payment of kid's school fee, house colony meeting, purchasing groceries and appointment with son's school teacher.

Some people appear very relaxed with time, while some others seem to be tensed even with daily chores. It depends on the outlook and priorities. Let us see how a person's attitude influences his time management skills.

Have to attend compulsorily, and immediately Father's death anniversary / Meeting boss/Talking to son's school teacher .	Can be avoided Playing cards with friends watching TV/Movie shooting / Meeting the favourite actor/ex-lover / Lunch with friend
Have to do compulsorily, but need not be immediately: Sister-in-law's matrimonial arrangement.	Can be asigned to others. Grocer shop /Electricity Bill/ colony meeting/ school fees.

Work chart of a self-centered and less sentimental person would be as under: Meeting the boss / favourite actor / ex-lover / Attending movie/ Lunch with friend/ shooting / watching TV/ Cards with friends/ Father's death anniversary/ talking to son's school teacher. The difference between two charts shows the relation between outlook and time management. Balance your priorities taking into consideration *useful* and *luring* jobs. Don't you agree that a self-centred person is more hard pressed for time?

(Answer: Nakula and Sahadeva = 5 minutes, Nakula returns = 5, Bhima and Dharma raja = 25; Sahadeva returns =5; Arjuna and Nakula = 10; Nakula returns = 5; Nakula and Sahadeva = 5: Total: 60 Minutes).

When you are clean bowled
It is not by the bowler, but by your carelessness.
When the football goes into your goal post
Not the opponent but it is your laziness.
When you could not make the pole vault
It's not the bar, but the doubt that failed you.
When you cannot complete a task on time
It's not that you are busy;
Your disregard to the job affected it.

QUALITIES OF SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE

SUCCESS IS... WORKING 'HAPPILY' TODAY
FOR A BETTER TOMORROW.

According to Greek mythology Atlas carries the earth on his shoulders. Ayn Rand articulates in her book 'Atlas Shrugged' that there are few people who carry the world on their shoulders and the earth collapses if they just shrug.

Bill Gates closing down Microsoft, Osama Bin Laden embracing Buddhism and Hitler shaking hands with Jews would certainly have its impact on the history. These people have a mark in the history either for Good or bad.

In a survey taken among 733 multi-millionaires across the world, when asked to rate the factors (out of 30) that are responsible for their success, the top five features they identified are: Being honest with others - Being well disciplined - Getting along with people - Having a supportive spouse - Belongingness to the work. Surprisingly their statements did not include 'strenuous work… working hard'.

There are four ***myths*** about success and creativity.

1. Creativity is needed only in arts like music, literature, painting, film making but not required in computers or in *daily chores.*
2. People born differently with inherent skill and brilliance are only creative and successful.
3. They are fortunate to grow up in different environment.
4. They travel through rough path to be prosperous.

'Tell me the best thing you did on earth and I will decide to send thee to the Hell or Heaven' said the God. The soul asked 'Excuse me almighty for my ignorance. What's the difference?' And the God replied 'In heaven they enjoy, hell is to work'. The soul got more confused, 'How can anyone enjoy without any work?'

Amused by his words, the God sent him back to earth to preach the same principle to the mankind.

What is hard work?

We think successful people work 24 hours a day. No. They know how, where and when to relax. *Laziness* and *relaxation* are two extremely different. After strenuous work we all need to rest. But rest does not mean sitting idle. It's 'taking up another interesting' work. If your fingers pain after strenuous typing, relax in cooking. Adopt different *useful* relaxation methods such as holidaying with family, partying with staff to get relief from work load. Motivators and authors often say that one should work hard for success. Here are two questions. What is Success? Success is happiness. When does the work become hard? It is when your body is stressed (tiresome) or when your mind is strained (boredom).

Waking up early with a back pain or climbing a hill to shoot a film in midsummer is a *physical* stress. Watching a lousy movie or studying an uninteresting subject is a *mental* strain. But when your body and mind are 'willing' to work, how can it become *hard work*?

Now the final conclusion… if success is *'happiness'* and hard work is *'boring'*, how can happiness and hard-work go parallel? If you have to work 'hard' for success, *at what point* would you stop working hard and be happy?

Elders persistently nag children from kindergarten age to study *hard*. After working hard for twenty years and getting a job, they ask them to work harder (!) for more money and fame. Then work hard to bring up children. When would this cycle end? Is there any stage where one is sure of being happy?

The soft noodles and brinjals you ordered in a star hotel tasted wonderful. Meanwhile the waiter came rushing and apologised that the plates were interchanged by mistake. He gave you the dishes ordered by a foreigner. What you ate were not noodles and brinjals but earthworm curry and skin peeled rats (☹).

Don't you feel like vomiting? Then how could the foreigner enjoy eating them? He was indoctrinated to eat worms and snakes from his childhood and enjoy its taste. The same analogy applies to life.

The secret success of effective people is that they cultivate interests according to their worthy priorities whereas ineffective people develop priorities supporting their worthless interests.

The divine book:

Parents and teachers should educate children that acquiring knowledge is the *happiest thing* in life. If a person is cursing himself while going to office and is happy only on the salary day, the ratio of his happy to unhappy days is 1: 29 in a month.

How to make it a better ratio? The answer is in the divine book which says '***develop interest in work and kill the unwanted desire'***. If you are disturbed by the thought of your friends while studying, let them understand your difficulty. Be away from them temporarily and see the change..! Same way if you are disturbed by thoughts of a favourite actor, keep away from his movies and discussions. Within few days, you will be amazed to see your sense of self-mastery, improving personal worth and enhancing self-confidence.

Since the advent of human civilisation, philosophers evolved various theories to enrich the life of mankind. One among them is 'Bhagvad Geetha'. It says *Karmanne vaardhikaarasthe*… Do your duty. Result is just a bonus.

> *While playing tennis-ball-gully cricket, you love to sweat. You enjoy the thrill and don't bother about win or lose. Playing is happiness - winning is bonus..! In another example, a gardener of a jasmine plantation enjoys the fresh scent of the dry earth while watering. He takes pleasure watching tiny white buds blossoming. He enjoys the aroma of flowers. He sells them ultimately. Selling is <u>bonus</u> - cultivation is <u>pleasure</u>.*

Three great truths are unveiled here: 1. Happiness is the way to reach the target. 2. Journey is happiness and not the target. 3. Never live just 'for' future happiness. Live 'with' present happiness.

The healthiest people are those who take pleasure in the simplest things. Enjoy the beauty of your hair while combing. Relish driving when you are in front of the steering. Enjoy the sleep while you are forced to watch a boring movie.

> *A young boy approached Gandhi, 'I want to become a great person like you. From where should I start?' Mahatma said, 'from loving your work'.*

Nirvana yoga:

Heart says, 'spend now' and conscience says, 'save for tomorrow'. May be both are correct. 'Nirvana' means judging the desire (itcha) with conscience (buddhi). 'Ishta' means desire. 'Ishti' means the ritual (*yaga)* wherein a platform (*Homam)* is created to burn medicinal leaves in the sacrificial fire. Here the platform is our 'body'. To make the flames stronger, throw the unwanted desires into Homam. This is the philosophy of the divine book.

Many of us unfortunately love final targets, but not the journey. We forget that, after reaching the first one… we have to travel to another target. Aiming to become a doctor is no doubt 'interesting', but preparing for medical entrance should also be interesting. If you are hosting a flag on Mount Everest, you should enjoy both hosting as well the travel. If you are going to a holiday-resort to stay for two days, and the travel takes six days, you should enjoy all the eight days. If your journey is monotonous, you are wasting 'six' days in melancholy, for 'two' days of happiness. Some people go to a hill station and from the next moment make themselves busy preparing for the return journey.

We throw soiled clothes under the bed where we spend most of the time and keep the drawing room clean and neat for others. This statement is to stress your connection with *'you'*. If we don't connect to ourselves, plan our future and organise our lives, who would do it for us? The difference between job and joy is just *one* alphabet. Nirvana enhances concentration If you are complaining lack of concentration and memory, follow the following four principles.

1. LISTENING DISCIPLINE

When your friend calls you at night to tell the story of a just seen movie, tell him you would listen to it the next day. If you say 'yes' it won't end up for next three hours. People argue that friendship is for sharing ideas. Sure. But there is a time even for gossip. Listening to gossip is a psychological weakness to satisfy our identity crisis. Psychologist say that people chat because they get rare opportunity to talk before unknown audience and express opinions. The bargain is, 'I have piles of garbage in my brain. Please accept it and in return I take yours.' This is the reason why the co-passenger starts the conversation with the question, 'where are you going?'

2. TALKING DISCIPLINE

If you don't talk when it is necessary you are spineless, if you talk when it is not necessary you are senseless. If you lack concentration be silent for an hour daily. You would be surprised to notice the difference. Listen to your friends gossiping *without involving* in their conversation. You would understand how people burn energies on unnecessary topics. If you notice effective people, you would understand that the more you go up on the success ladder; the urge diminishes to talk unnecessarily.

3. EATING DISCIPLINE

Animals don't have food discipline. Do you *eat* to live or *live* to eat? Surely we don't live to eat. But if you say, 'I eat just to live' even that answer is wrong. Unlike animals, we eat ice-creams, pizzas just for *pleasure*. To enjoy the taste of eating you require food discipline. You cannot enjoy eating Biryani or a sweet every day. Ever watched a kid enjoying his ice lolly? First he adores the colour, appreciates the smell and finally the taste. Live to eat on Sunday. Eat to live on other days. Then you would enjoy your food like a kid.

To control the desire to eat more, keep a sweet on your study table and read. Keep it back after finishing studies. Initially you feel the temptation to eat. But gradually you feel elated with the conquered feeling that you won over your desire. Then you eat.

4. PEEPING DISCIPLINE

We never stop at a new construction, but watch interestingly a bulldozer demolishing a house. If police are getting the huts of the poor vacated, we wait to see the drama. Our 'id' wishes to see the crooked things. Nirvana means power of controlling temptations like watching a movie on the first day of its release, browsing pornography sites etc.

People are excited to watch two people arguing violently after an accident, enjoy more if it is a fist-fight; and feel disappointed if they both say sorry to each other, shake hands and go.

The power of organising life:

Have you ever wondered why two youngsters, though born to same parents, enjoyed the same comforts and educated in the same college are different? The dissimilarity lies in organising..!

A Sanskrit poem associates the fate of a raindrop with the place it lands on. It evaporates in a flash second on a hot iron. Your future is moulded by the group you are associated with. If you are among vagabonds you vanish without any purposeful existence.

The rain drop twinkles for few hours on a lotus leaf resembling students who glitter as heroes during college life but extinct later. However if it drops into a sea-shell, it evolves as a sparkling pearl. Unlike raindrops, we can decide where to land on, and whom to associate with.

Our parents organise our lives according to their will. Gradually we take charge. But do we plan it properly? May not be..! Peer influences; Lack of vision and Lethargy guide us. It would be too late by the time we realise something not going according to what we wished.

"I discontinued my studies after failing intermediate Saab. I used to read your books in my tenth class" the auto driver said while taking me to the Railway station. "My son is in intermediate. He is very careless about studies. Now look. I wake up at 4.30 and go to railway station to catch up early morning passengers for that small extra meter-charge. I go home at nine in the night. May be I have to do this 'throughout' my life. Had I woken up this early at 4.30 in my college days, I would have been sleeping happily for my entire life. My son does not understand this simple fact."

Planning saves a lot of time. *For every second spent in organising, an hour is gained while performing.* No other single hour will give you as much dividends as the hour you invest in planning *time* and *work*.

Organising the work includes: prioritisation, decentralisation, creating suitable work atmosphere, arranging the ambience. Work environment has great effect on productivity. Few people like tranquillity and others are comfortable with bustling noises around them. I prefer while writing to have bird sounds, fish in the aquarium and freshening incense fragrance in the air.

Some are good at organising multitasks whereas others can work only on a single job. For instance, a director may work on one movie at a time, while some others can simultaneously plan four or five and can be successful. Understand which category you belong to. A person's organisational styles depend on his interests, and needs. The following categories of people suffer from disorganisation.

Hoppers: Hoppers enjoy the speed, try to complete several tasks at one time to have immediate gratification and leave many of them unfinished. These people are **not** as effective as they believe to be; and are the most confused lot. If you are a hopper, divide your masterwork into small tasks; allot time to each of the *mini* goal.

A parent wants his child to be topper in IIT as well as to compete in the Olympics. In turn he transforms his kid also as a hopper incapable of deciding his priorities.

Perfectionists: In their eagerness to strive for excellence, perfectionists get so involved with each detail that they never complete it. They should understand that 'what might be an average outcome to them is perfectly acceptable to others' and lower their standards on insignificant tasks, to finish off the job on time.

One of my friends is working on a CD on all slokas of Bhagvad Geetha, a great job that nobody attempted till now. He started it 6 years ago and still working for perfection.

Skippers: Skippers are great in dealing with the overall issues, but impatient while executing finer points. If you are overconfident, you are in trouble when simple details constitute an important role, such as preparing balance sheets. You should learn to develop checklists and stop at intervals to inspect your actions.

A house wife cooks excellently but always forgets to switch off the gas. A brilliant student does not check through the answer sheet after writing the exam.

Fence sitters: If you are unable to decide among two or more choices and waiting for just one (and only one) ideal solution, you are called a 'Fence Sitter'. Being afraid of making a wrong choice, fence sitters make no choice at all. The best solution for them is to narrow down the tasks, think of possible alternatives, rank each against others and create firm deadlines.

Identifying own element:

A young lecturer working at a remote rural engineering college said, "I dreamt of Bill Gates or Narayana Murthy driving his car into our campus to pick me up for a job. My dreams shattered. I am getting 10% of what I expected my salary would be. Above it, I am missing the city life."

This is the case of many youngsters. You are the most fortunate few, if things '*you love to do'* and '*you are good at'* come together. To attain this bliss ask three questions: what I want – Where is it – How to get it. Make out the difference between employees hurriedly entering into call centres and people working in a profession of their interest. Watch Ustad Zakir Husain on Tabla, Chittibabu on Veena, Sivamani on drums or Lalgudi with violin. What are the common qualities of these great people?

Involvement: They forget the world and meditate. It is called *involvement* and *dedication*. Whether it is a multi-million dollar business or cooking in the kitchen, teaching students or driving an RTC bus, belong to your job. Involvement is the only way to derive pleasure of work.

Professional brilliancy: They have core competency. Don't confuse between *core-competency* and *core-desire*. It is not enough if you have a burning desire to become a politician, but should have orating capacity, memory to remember people, diplomacy and pleasing body language.

Endurance: They have the capacity to withstand the psychological and financial stress until the first break-through. I suggested the same principle to the lecturer not to harm the students with his disgust while teaching; withstand frustration and try for new avenues like research or learning soft skills, C++ etc.

Interest: They have 'immense interest' in their job. A player feels distressed when a practice session is cancelled due to rain, whereas a student enjoys unexpected holiday. Fortunate people discover own element early. But one need not get disappointed even if it is late. Success has nothing to do with age.

My classmate's son was interested in music. His parents had reservations about film field. The boy joined as a small employee, took a risk after his father's death, resigned his job and joined as an assistant to a music director. He is now one of the best music directors of Tollywood charging few millions for a film.

Dedication:

Intelligence may be God's gift, but dedication is self-developed. It is performing a work with body mind and soul. Heart is the synonym for 'dedication'. It beats throughout the life to fill the life.

Many skills are not inborn, but acquired with dedication. Take the example of our film heroes. They don't have much of an acting prowess and facial expressions like their seniors. They are still successful because of their dedication in dances and fights.

Latha Mangeshkar was to sing a song for our film. Ilaya Raja was the music director. She asked for the English version of the lyrics. I was surprised. Many non-Telugu singers ask for the mood of the song but not translated version. When I expressed the doubt, she smiled, 'Understanding the mood is certainly important. But knowing the meaning of each word gives the singer more confidence.' That is the belongingness to the job.

Millions were born in the hilly areas but Tensing Norgay could only conquer the Everest. Many flew kites but Wright Brothers invented the aeroplane. The world saw the sufferings but Gautama Buddha alone became a prophet. That is dedication.

Job done with dedication gives greater satisfaction. A painter or a writer, who works entire night when the world is sleeping, understands the pleasure while stretching the body after a successful accomplishment.

Promise management:

When a friend of mine was critically ill, I called his wife and said I would meet him the next day. I could not make it. A day later he died. I could never forgive myself. Personality development motivators and writers deal with Stress management, Emotional balance and Finance administration but don't talk (or write) about the significance of promise management.

In Christianity *promise* is different from oath. In Quran both are same and God is the witness for every promise. Promise management is character development. Promises may not strengthen relationships, but non-performance will surely turn people into enemies. 'Promises are like crying babies in a theatre. They should be carried out at once' said Peale.

Assure only what you can deliver; and deliver more than what you assured. Unfortunately, we promise based on our *hopes* but perform according to *realities*. Being trustworthy is keeping 'other's interests' over your interest*. Prompt payment enhances creditworthiness. Commit precise date instead of giving false commitment and irritating the creditor to chase you. Give margin as estimates may go wrong. Do everything to meet your word, but when that becomes impossible, admit your inability early (rather than on the due date). Don't lie to avoid the crisis. When you cannot carry out your word, you may have to lie again. One lie is the mother of the next hundred lies.

'Don't promise too much' is the first suggestion given to the newly married couples. Trust starts crumbling with a lie or a cover-up for a forgotten birthday. Relationships are built on trust, but people consider spouse and friends trivial. A person promises his wife to return home early from the office but never keeps up his word. It has a three-way effect: firstly on his wife frustrated for waiting, secondly on himself with guilt feeling; and thirdly on both as he feels harassed by her repeated calls and she feels that she is being neglected.

If you are breaking promises regularly, there can be three reasons. A broken promise suggests that the person whom you promised is not your priority, you want to please many people beyond your capacity and you feel that your promise is not too important to be kept.

Kids hide their progress report to put off the day of reckoning. It is like throwing today's problem into tomorrow's court. We also behave the same way. There need not be great reasons for breaking promises.

A clerk promises a party in a star hotel on his elevation to an officer. He continuously postpones it because he has never done it before. He covers up his 'fear of new venture' with justifications like 'I am verifying the hotels… checking up with the menu etc.'

Do you remember the elementary school poem on Casablanca? *'The boy stood on the burning deck...'* The story is about a 12 year old boy called Casablanca during the Battle of the Nile, where his father asks his son to wait till he returns. The ship catches fire but the boy does not move from the deck obliging his father's instructions.

Punctuality:

My drama director believed in strict punctuality. The curtain used to rise on dot even if the theatre is empty. Soon people realised that the performance would not stop for them. Thus he could inculcate the habit of punctuality for stage plays on par with movie shows.

A person's attitude can be judged by his punctuality. A person's disrespect to other's time is reflected in three ways:

1. "I am taking bath and will revert back in just five minutes" says your friend and never calls you back. After waiting for one hour when you call up, the answer would be, "Oh! I am sorry, I forgot".
2. You may be a V.V.I.P and not be able to attend to all missed calls. But not bothering to call back close friends and relatives shows your egotism that 'they will call back if interested'.
3. Not bothering to inform in case of delay in prior appointments, taking other's time for granted or lying to cover up the delay when confronted.

   A lawyer invited a doctor and me for dinner. As the doctor did not turn up on time, we called him. He said that he was stuck in traffic. After another half-an-hour, when the irritated host enquired again, his secretary, who did not know our earlier conversation, informed that her boss just finished work and is about to start.

   He arrived late by an hour. When the uncompromising host confronted him for the delay and lie, he took support of his knowledge about psychology. "Hope is better than disappointment. Expectation keeps us alive."

   After three months, the lawyer friend sent a birthday card to the doctor. I still remember those words. "It is not what we gain but what we save that makes us rich..! Not what we read but what we remember that makes us learned..! And not what we profess but what we practice that gives us integrity..!"

We have been discussing positive qualities of successful people, like organising life, enthusiasm, smart work, dedication, punctuality and promise management. Let us now look into the qualities of unsuccessful people.

Apathy:

Apathy is lack of physical stamina or enthusiasm or both. "Ten thousand innocent police died in a blast by terrorists" you say and the apathetic person shrugs without sympathy or emotion. "Our friend is leaving the country and won't come back for a decade. Let's meet him." you say and he sighs, "I am not interested."

You are required to pass through a metal detector in an airport or at a star hotel. It shows the unsolicited item holding on to you. We all have *me(n)tal* detectors to show where we are going wrong, but we have to keep it in working condition.

House maker: I feel very bored in life and wish to die.
Psy: Do you have any problem?
Hm: No. I don't have any major problem.
Psy: How many children do you have?
Hm: Two. They go to school early and have late night tuitions.
Psy: Husband?
Hm: He lives in his world of profession.
Psy: Means?
Hm: The other day he went to the office.
Psy: What is wrong in it?
Hm: And returned when the watchman said it was Sunday.
Psy: (Thinks deeply for a while) Any financial problems?
Hm: No. No. We don't have any financial hitches.
(The psychologist could gauge her problem.)
Psy: What do you do the whole day in the absence of your husband and children?
Hm: I do a lot of work at home.
Psy: How do you mentally relax when you are tired?
Hm: I don't know. I am not aware of such big words.
Psy: Do you listen to music or read books or watch TV?
Hm: Daily one movie and four serials. That also turns me off. Now and then I read something. Even that is boring.
Psy: Tell me something about your daily routine.
Hm: Everybody leaves in the morning. I do the household chores and watch TV. I chat with neighbours. Later I would be busy with children. We eat and sleep… That's it.'

This is where a metal detector fails to work. She is not able to derive happiness from any corner. Our metal detector should be oiled regularly. The oil is 'enthusiasm'. Quoting this, the psychologist told her about an old lady.

An old widow was living with her son and his family. She was good at making toys with bamboo. She hired a shop. The meagre income from the shop was not comparable with her son's emoluments. Still, it gave her the satisfaction that she was not dependent. She could command respect. If she had preferred to sit idle, she knew that she would interfere in the family matters and damage her relationship with her daughter-in-law. With a healthy occupation, she could avoid usual lethargy, otherwise called 'old age syndrome' and was adorned with ornaments of self-respect, confidence and satisfaction.

The psychologist gave this example and advised the client to cultivate a hobby of her own interest like gardening or glass painting and come again to analyse the results. The lady never turned up.

Why do some passengers do not keep the railway toilets clean? Why some drawing rooms in some houses emanate bad odour? Why an enquiry clerk does not answer the quarries with a pleasant voice? Why do some employees always come late to the office, leave early and spend most of the time at the canteen? Why people do not work for more prosperity, fame and mental peace?

Apathy is dearth of sense of purpose. Apathetic people do not possess skill to confront a challenge. This *absence of passion* can be fought with good physical fitness, healthy life styles, by reading good literature, developing mental alertness by churning brain with puzzles and exercises and emotional exercises comprising empathy and love.

Gautama Buddha compares an apathetic person with a prisoner during a festival day. When people say, "Oh… this festival was so much fun" he will remain silent. While enjoying the festival on a later occasion, he looks back and thinks, "Due to my own mistake (Lethargy) I missed the previous festival. Henceforth I should be alert and careful." If he does not think so, he would never be able to enjoy the festival (of life).

One way to cure lethargy is to become addicted to the endorphins that get released while exercising. When you feel tired, go out and walk for twenty minutes. You feel better and healthier day by day and once you start noticing a positive change, you look forward to these things more enthusiastically.

The best way to come of apathy is to taste the success. Look at the people around you, auto drivers, bus conductors, clerks, businessmen, executives, politicians who lost the spark in their eyes due to lack of sincerity, apathy in work, and passiveness towards life. This is exactly the difference between enthusiostic children and grown ups.

A small piece of wood, three sticks and a rubber ball is enough to glimmer a child's eyes. He gets such an opportunity almost every day. How many times does a politician get such a spark in his eyes? How many such opportunities does a busy executive get in a day? Don't you agree that their B.P rises more number of times than the number of sparks in a day?

There is another type of apathetic people. You find a road side beggar shivering. Her blanket is few feet away but she is not able to pull it up towards her because she is paralytic. She requests you to push it at least with your leg. Do you do it? There are people who do not do it. Surprised..? Here is a true example.

A girl from an engineering college at Tirupati answered brilliantly all my questions during a training session. Later when I asked the students how many of them worked part time to help their parents financially, this girl also raised her hand. I was pleasantly surprised when she told that she worked as a daily labourer in agricultural fields.

After returning, I discussed with my son about assisting her from our Vidya Peetam funds meant for tribal students. I called the Principal and asked him to provide her details. After four futile attempts I could find her address from some other source and sent the cheque, but the problem with the principal was that whenever I called the answer was, "Sure sir… sorry sir… I forgot… definitely tomorrow…"

Sloth is one of the seven deadly sins in Christian moral tradition which is often defined as physical apathy. If apathy is '*disgusting comfort*', work-holism is '*comfort in disgust*'.

Workaholic syndrome:

An interest growing beyond logic is called weakness. The phrase '*I'm working*' has an air of success. But if you are occupied with work in order to avoid yourself, you are called workaholic. It is like drinking salt water when you are thirsty. Work-holism is antonym for Apathy. Unfortunately both lifestyles offer a momentary soothing but end up in regret. *Workaholics* are different from *work-interested* people. The latter derive pleasure from different jobs, balance between self and institutional interests, relax in sports, touring places etc.

The following are workaholic symptoms:

1. I work for 70 hours per week on my single job.
2. My organisation would collapse if I don't work this hard.
3. Office papers are my best bedtime and early morning reading material. I am proud to be a night owl and an early riser.
4. I am proud of reaching office before the night watchman leaves.
5. I am so work-conscious that I regularly check my cell phone for office messages even while watching a movie .
6. I take papers even to the restaurant. I read them and call on my people while my wife is taking care of my kids and menu.
7. I often acknowledge, 'without my wife, I would not have achieved this' to make her more 'responsible' than joyful.

Workaholics chase pleasure in work and only in work. They can't enjoy a vacation. They talk only about work in parties, without bothering whether the listener is interested. They try to squeeze the life, fail in life, tired of life, bogged down by life and finally become paralysed in life. It is called 'Loss of heart'. But these have a feeling that they are 'above normal people'. Thus work holism lands at two terminals: Resigning to emptiness (or) Driving to 'couldn't care less' attitude.

Losing an important target for a futile temporary happiness
May lead to failure,
But avoiding all the pleasures for just one target
Would also result in unhappiness.

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

EVERY PERSON HAS A LEADER WITHIN.
IF YOU ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL,
MAY BE HE IS SLEEPING.

A leader Learns from experiences, Emotionally balanced, Able to communicate, Develops new strategies, Equally shares success with others but owns Responsibility for failure. A parent, housewife, teacher, employer, politician and student have a leader in them… good or bad… capable or incompetent… skilled or unskilled… awake or asleep.

A good personality is the combination of a *leader* and a *manager* in one person. The leader takes decisions and the manager follows them. The makeup quotient is governed by each person's wisdom.

The leader is dormant in our childhood in the sense that we follow our elders. The leader in us grows along with age. Of course for few people the leader is always inactive. Here are few basic differences between the qualities of a leader and manager.

- Leaders are administrators; managers work as members.
- Managers ask how and when; leaders ask what and why?
- Leaders originate jobs; Managers complete assigned jobs.
- Managers keep status-quo; leaders challenge status-quo.
- Managers hate challenges; leaders master conflicts.

A person who never listens to suggestions, or who always follows other's suggestions can never be leader. A good leader listens to suggestions but keeps the decision with him.

When the manager gives a suggestion, if you feel that they are good, follow them. It is 'listening to your inner voice'. Your greatest shrewdness lies in deciding between acting as a leader (to take your own decision) or a manager (follow other's suggestion) depends on each situation.

You are a diehard fan of a hero who comes to your work place where you are engaged on an important task. The manager (in you) wishes to rush to him. If the leader cannot stop him, you are a feeble personality.

When you fail, the manager in you becomes an excellent self-defence lawyer, blaming outward reasons to cover up the failure. If the leader (in you) accepts his version, it amounts to 'managerial mystique'.

'Managerial mystique' is the poorest quality of a leader. When things go wrong, avoiding responsibility is bad, supporting your people is worse; blaming 'them' is the worst. As family head or chief of the institution or as a captain of the team, leaders are excellent team players and are synergetic. Synergy means bonding the members for more productivity.

Leaders attain the position by ability, quality; seniority, inheritance or through crooked methods. There are 4 theories.

1. Trait Theory: Heirs of the kings and politicians become leaders by inheritance. Some perish and few are able to sustain the position. Congress leaders are the example.

2. Personality Theory: Some people opine that 'charisma, stardom, good personality, authoritative voice and oratory skills' can work miracles. May be true initially, but not always..!

3. Crisis theory: People like Potti Sriramulu and Anna Hazare rose to the occasion in a crisis and showed their extraordinary leadership qualities. Some others like Lal Bahadur Shastriji, Man Mohan Singh and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair strengthened their position with truthfulness when luck bestowed on them.

4. Transformational Theory: With strong desire, will power and practice, you can become a leader. Good leaders are self-made, not born. They develop through a never-ending process of self-study, education, training and experience. They develop the art of talking in public, diplomacy, decision making, public relations and emotional balance. This is the most widely accepted theory.

Don't get depressed if you are failing constantly. Leaders also have insecurities. But they fight rather than succumbing to the pressures. They see the problem both at micro and macro level. When your television goes blank, you believe that the fault is either with your set or cable operator, but not with the transmitting channel. In the same fashion, realise that the fault lies *not* with your wisdom, but with your fear of failure and lethargy.

A leader knows when to behave rationally and where to respect public (or family) sentiments though they are illogical and irrational.

A father advised his daughter "You are already running fifteen. Still you are swinging a Barbie doll in a cradle and enjoying like a small child. Be more matured". The girl smiled, "You paid 1000 per ticket for all of us to see a small statue of God being swung in a cradle."

It is an excellent example to show that 'Enjoyment, logic, innocence and rationality does not go together'. Another quality of a leader is confidence. It is the faith in your abilities without fear of the unknown. On the other hand, uncertainty is a state of mind where you choke just at the moment, when confidence is needed the most.

Few practical exercises help you fight your insecurities. For example, when you are distressed with chronic fear complex, change your friends. They are the people who give you suggestions, indirectly making you believe that you are weak. Try to stand in front. Develop communication skills. Enhance knowledge. These simple things give lot of confidence. Mend body language to improve confidence levels. Look straight into the opposite person's eyes while talking. Avoiding looks shows your fear complex or guilt. Raise shoulders, head and walk faster than what you are habituated to and see how it boosts your confidence levels.

In an old movie, a priest gives an idol to a timid king to keep it with him while fighting, for an assured victory. The king wins the battle, but finds the idol missing while fighting. He realises that the faith gave him the victory and not the idol.

A leader never loses his temper. Few are serious, but many are smiling, pleasant with a grin that gives assurance to their followers.

Laugh loudly whenever opportunity permits. The heartfelt laugh in crisis is the symbol of self-confidence. A loud laugh throws your inhibitions away. 'Go out into the world and sing as if no one is listening; dance as if nobody is watching; and that is the way you start enjoying your presence. 'Self-confidence is something you 'act' upon, not something you learn. Building confidence involves two steps. Realise where you currently are; and where you want to be. And identify what you need to get there, the reasons and insecurities that are pulling you down.

DECISION MAKING

A boy spends hours unable to decide which film to watch. A girl spends hours not being able to select accessories. At a macro level, a person has to decide whether to build a house or stay as a tenant; a software employee between present comfortable job and another with a pay-hike.

Decision making is the cognitive process of selecting among several alternatives. We make thousand decisions per day, first being whether to get up or to stay in bed. Life management includes simple things like deciding about a shirt; hair-style and the channel to watch and major issues like quitting smoking, choosing a career..!

Animals have only two decisions to take: to fight in offence or to run in defence. The greatest quality of the human is the bird's eye view about future impact. Good decision makers often do make instant decisions, but assess the long term implications also. Whether to take a decision now or later is also a decision.

Here are few tips for a good decision:

1. Is it practicle? Can I do it or am I too optimistic or pessimistic about my capabilities?
2. How much time should I spend on thinking for a decision? Is it really necessary to spend that much time?
3. Is it *my* business? Or for someone else? Am I giving an uncalled for advice?
4. Am I too selfish to take this decision? If my decision is to affect others, am I considering their loss and their values? What effect this decision would have on my relationships?
5. Am I sticking wrongly on to the first thought that occurred to my mind? Am I taking a decision by flipping a coin, cutting a deck of playing cards or by the words of a fake astrologer?
6. Am I one among many those people who don't listen to a good advice if it does not suit their preferences?

Good decisions come from experience and experience comes through bad decisions. The below example is taught in business schools and is about looking into various intricacies before passing a decision.

The tall administrative building of a company, standing in the middle of the city is a proud possession for their employees. They used to light up the building exteriors extravagantly, making it a feast. While signing the voucher, the Managing Director wondered why such huge amount is spent so often for colouring the building. The subordinates told him that it is due to bird droppings.

"When there are many buildings in the city, why bird-droppings should trouble us only?" he questioned. The staff told that it is due to the bird nests and suggested that the branches of the trees may be chopped off. Estimates were prepared. The Chief Executive was not convinced. "When there are many buildings amidst trees, why our building stood as their host?" he queried.

It was found that insects from nearby slums attracted the birds. Proposals were made for pest control that ran into lakhs of rupees. The executive got the same doubt, 'When there are many slums around, why the birds should prefer our insects only?'

Next investigation proved that the building was illuminated half an hour earlier than regular city lights, with over enthusiasm to display it to the public. The insects from all around were thus attracted followed by the birds. The company could save millions of rupees by delaying the lighting by one hour.*

Before taking a decision, make sure that you cover all positive and negative aspects. Never rely on one opinion for key decisions. The expert suggests from 'his' experience. For a question, "Shall I divorce?" the counsellor may say "Yes… immediately" if he is a misogynist (woman hater) and "No… never" if he believes in marriage ethics. Don't show up your indecisiveness unless the counsellor is wise, experienced or unselfish. When you are unable to choose, the other person show you the route but does not take responsibility for the result.

The sales man influences you when you are in a dilemma to select your dress but later you have to take the responsibility for compliments or criticism. He does not come into the picture.

There are five types of decisions:

1. Irreversible: Many important decisions in life are irrevocable. Make a list of advantages and risk factors of each option while taking irrevocable decisions like selecting a career, choosing a life partner, purchasing a property, pleading guilty in a court.

I was scoring more than nineties in maths. My parents asked me to choose biological sciences in intermediate to have a doctor in our family. I could not get a seat in medicine. This was almost an irreversible decision but luckily I could go back to commerce.

2. Reversible: Reversible decisions can be changed during the process when the results are not satisfactory and when you are not sure whether *additional investment* leads to further losses or profits. You can take a decision to stop playing while losing money in gambling, but it requires lot of self-control.

A new director lured a businessman that a film could be made with few lakhs and started production. After draining the total amount in first schedule itself, the producer took it as matter of prestige. Not heeding to our suggestions he spent more than 20 million to complete it. The film was never released.

3. Trial and Error: Take a risk when you are unclear about the correct move but clear about the direction and sure of no dangerous damages. These decisions are to be made in different phases, monitoring the feedback. It is like working in a lab with various permutations and combinations.

I was unable to decide whether to continue career in cricket or concentrate on studies when I was my college cricket team captain. I tried practicing cricket for few more years but realised that my standard of cricket is not enough even to play Ranji. I stopped playing the game and concentrated on my education.

4. Delayed decisions: Delay a decision for the right time and opportunity if it can wait. This is applicable mainly to politics. It is like studying maths and to decide later whether to study C.A or Engineering. This category also includes two modern and independent people living together and marrying later if both like each other.

5. VALUE BASED DECISIONS: Decision becomes tough when values are involved. Lovers sometimes may have to choose between two values… parents and beloved. People spend a lot on marriages saying *'After all money is not the ultimate'*, but fight with own brothers and sisters while partition of properties. Here is one classic decision I have ever read:

> *Two brothers were quarrelling for ancestral property. Fed up with them the disgusted judge gave a single line judgment, 'Let one divide it into two; and the other choose one'.*

To make it simple, here is the 'D-E-C-I-D-E' formula: Determine objective, Evaluate alternatives, Choose the best, Initiate new technique, Draw schedule and Eliminate non-priorities.

Hasty decisions:

One evening you suddenly wish to go out to the shopping mall even though there is nothing to buy, or feel like going to a movie unmindful of the film. These impulsive decisions are based on our moods. Suicide due to failure in exams or love is a result of hasty decision.

> *When an impulsive judgment causes loss, it is called a HASTY decision. Suicide due to failure in exams or love is a good example of a hasty decision.*

We need not ponder pros and cons of every choice, but certainly should think of the risks. On impulse, the President of a country cannot throw a nuclear bomb on a rival country. An infatuated girl should not take a decision to marry on impulse. The end-result may be equally dangerous in both cases.

Do not take any important decision when you are angry, hungry, depressed, frustrated or to take revenge.

The movie affect : A cine-hero has four daughters. He killed his third son-in-law. Judge asked the reason. "He was an ardent fan of me." said the hero. The judge was surprised. "Did you kill him for that reason?"
"No" said the hero. "In few films I romanced with my mother-in-law and heroine's other sisters. My son-in-law is my true follower. He did the same thing in my house with my wife and other daughters. In a fit of anger I killed him."

An industrialist made a surprise visit to his factory at the outskirts and found a worker snoozing on the warehouse steps. He stopped his car and yelled at him on what he was doing. "Taking rest" said the careless youth. Annoyed with the answer, "Don't you know the working hours of the factory?" the owner screamed.

Noticing the commotion, the supervisor came running. Meanwhile the worker countered, "What's wrong in napping on the footsteps?" More irritated by the answer than his deed, the businessman queried "What is your salary?"

"Three thousand" was the reckless reply. The owner pulled out his purse, threw the money and shouted, "Here is your two months' salary. Never step in again".

As the supervisor reached there, the owner's fury turned against him. "Do you know how to administer the workers? Is it not a shame that our people sleep during the working hours?" Before the manager could speak, the owner continued, "It is ok. I removed him from the service. See that these incidents won't happen in future."

The supervisor murmured, "But sir, he is not our employee… just came to deliver the raw materials."

Wrong and biased decisions:

In many cases we are happy with our decision, but not with the implementation. *Having decided to play for the country, a boy does not concentrate on studies. So far it's ok, but he does not even work strenuously to get selected. He loses both the careers. Intention is good but implementation is weak.*

Sometimes we dislike a decision but excited about the outcome. *While selling an inherited property or mother's ancestral Veena, the sentimental feeling pinches, but the outcome is luring.*

While taking a decision and with its outcome if you are happy it is the best choice. It is called 8P formula*: Plan Purposefully, Prepare Persistently, Proceed Positively and Pursue Productively.*

On contrary, the following factors lead to biased decisions.

1. First idea flash syndrome: We believe that 'first impression is the best.' We expand the idea without further rethinking.

The new film director is excited about a story he nurtured over years. When he gets an opportunity, he is reluctant to change the story in spite of his seniors advising him that it is too obsolete.

2. Fear of success: Fear of success is more deceptive and unconscious. The anxiety over the side effects of success influences our decision.

A teacher rejects her promotion as head mistress; not because 'teaching' is her passion, but out of fear of handling the post.

3. Fear of end result: The dilemma about the end result sometimes influences the decision.

A boy is in love with a girl but could not express it with the fear that she might even stop talking. A boy hesitates to prepare for civil services with the fear that he may not get a job at a later age if he fails.

4. Biased contemporary influence: With our meagre knowledge we believe that our decisions are correct supported by peer influence, group thinking and confirmation by different sources.

Parents join their children when a corporate college opens a new branch in their town, without bothering to enquire about the teaching staff just because the said college has the goodwill of being the best. Same way, a biased opinion influences people from taking a good decision. They never try to look at the brighter side once they form an opinion. Few years ago, Chartered Accountancy was not considered as remunerative as medicine or engineering. Many were averse to join their children in C.A.

5. The End result syndrome: We are excited with the final rosy result. We gather all the facts that 'support' our choice, but not the negative factors. We weed-out the information that we don't digest.

When the parents want their child to study engineering, they discuss its bright prospects, without considering his ability. They do not contemplate that there is no bright future for the student passing from a substandard college with poor marks.

6. Decisions during failure: 'Wasting time' on unattainable goals is different from 'underestimating own capacities'. Taking a decision becomes sensitive when you have confidence but the results are not encouraging.

> *The initial response for my serial* Thulasidalam *was discouraging. In the sixth week, the editor asked me to cut it short and end it at the earliest. I requested him to wait for few more weeks as I was confident. From the 10th week the word of mouth spread. Sales of the weekly rose from 10,000 to 120,000 in a span of two months. The serial continued for 52 weeks and was extended further by another 52 weeks on the request of the management.*

Decidophobia:

> *A girl faces Catch-22 situation when parents bring marriage alliance with a rich and beautiful person and on the other side an intelligent but poor classmate proposes her. A newly married girl wants to conceive, but is apprehensive of losing her career as a dancer. Nevertheless, the urge to become mother dominates.*

Decidophobia is the indecisiveness between two luring goals. It is more harmful than taking a hasty decision. It is like sitting on a rocking chair that gives you some satisfaction of moving but takes you nowhere. It affects daily chores also.

> *While going to the garage to clean the car, I notice the mail on the table and decide to check the mail first. While discarding the junk mail I notice that the trash-can is full and decide to dump it first. I then see the empty plastic cup and choose to put it back in the kitchen sink. At the end I'm baffled because I was busy all the day, but nothing had happened!*

We take decisions according to our hopes but perform according to our fears. This is where we fail. We find remote and unbelievable excuses even for positive decisions. A person wishes to lose weight but argues, 'If I lose weight, I have to buy new clothes, some overweight friends would be jealous of me, my family may resist my diet in a restaurant and after losing my weight I may feel stressed out early…' and so on... most unreasonable excuses..!

Burning the ship:

A guest sitting by my side in a function asked me whether I saw his TV interview the previous day, wherein he mentioned my name. Surprised as I asked 'why' he said, "I was working in a remote Telangana village for a salary of 3,000. I wanted to try my hand as a lyric writer but was oscillating whether to risk the job. Then I read about 'Decision' in your book on Success. I sent the resignation letter that night itself, with the fear that I may change my mind by next day. I gave my wife 5,000 to manage for three months and came to the city."

I knew the rest of his story. He wrote around 1600 songs for 400 films and won National Award for his latest song.

Being unable to choose between *useful* and *soothing* alternatives. We hesitate to jump into a 'risk' zone from a 'comfort' zone even for betterment.

'Burning the ship' means destroying all the other alternatives. Soldiers fight fiercely when they know that there are no escape routes and only a victory would save them. Contrary to this, a brave Army General creates an escape-route to the rival force to flee so that they don't put up tough fight.

While sending hand-written manuscript to the editor with too many modifications, I would be in a dilemma whether to re-write it again. Without thinking further I tear them off and would be left with no choice except to write it again.

Jettison all other alternatives. It is the antidote for hesitation. It leaves you with only one choice. Suppose your teacher announces class test for next day. You have tickets for today's show. Instead of brooding over the matter, give them to your neighbour.

When God helps you
You develop faith in His decision
When he is delaying
He has faith in your decisions..!*

WISDOM

KNOWLEDGE IS LEARNING A GOOD THING DAILY;
WISDOM IS LOSING DAILY ONE BAD THING.

You cannot stay successful in spite of your enormous riches and power if you are not wise. Wisdom is taking the best decision under tension, emotional balance in crisis and reaching the correct answer faster than others; using intelligence, knowledge, lateral and rational thinking. Now the question is 'can wisdom be developed?' No doubt the answer is 'yes'. Before going into details, let us understand what wisdom is.

'What is wisdom?' a girl enquired her mother.
The mother asked her whether she could eat a cup of sugar.
'No' said the girl.
'How about a kilo of flour, a dozen eggs or a spoon of essence?' the mother asked. The confused girl said 'no'.
Her mother smiled, 'But if I prepare a cake mixing all of them, you would love to eat. Isn't it? Wisdom is a cake. The ingredients are Intelligence, Knowledge etc. Intelligence is sugar, knowledge is flour, experiences are eggs and lateral thinking is essence. Skill, Logic, Spontaneity and Common sense are other ingredients. Individually they have their own identity but worthless unless combined in correct proportions.'

Repairing a fan is Wisdom. Analysing whether the problem is with the plug, wire or fan is Knowledge. Opening it is Experience. Not touching live wire without gloves is Maturity. Repairing it quickly is Skill. Checking first whether it is due to power failure is Common sense.

Application of knowledge is intelligence. Hence we cannot call a person intelligent if he does not possess basic knowledge. Contrary to it, all knowledgeable people need not be intelligent. Maturity is different. By experience a person becomes more matured. All wise people need not be skilled. Skill is often associated with physical endeavours.

Knowledge is recognising tomato as a fruit. Not adding it in fruit-salad is Wisdom. Boiling it in a sugar sauce and topping on fruit-salad is Lateral thinking. Considering that cherries are better replacement is Rational thinking. Frying fruit-salad is Stupidity.

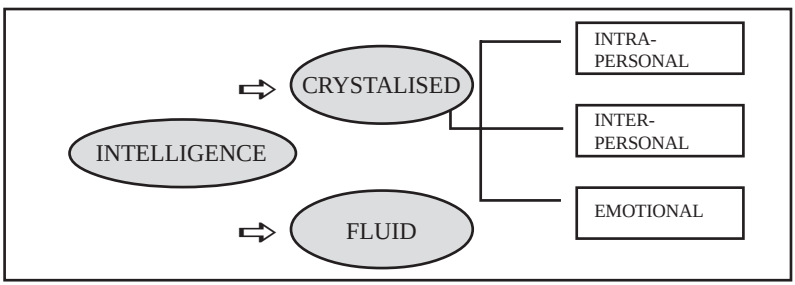
Intelligence:

Can you define intelligence? Not easy. It is the ability to *make use of* the knowledge to *analyse* the problem and plan to reach at the *correct* solution to get a concrete result *quicker than others*.

Few children are very bright at their early age, but fail later because 'Intelligence' does not develop with age all by itself. It is to be nurtured with care and conscientiousness. Marks are certainly not the criteria to assess the intelligence of a child, at least in the initial stages of education. An intelligent child may not get good marks because of inadequate effort. And a child who gets good marks may not be intelligent, but merely 'industrious'. Subjects like maths and accounts require intelligence and zoology and medicine require more industry and memory. Students not recognising this simple fact prefer luring courses than the fields in which they can shine better.

A carpenter may be excellent and innovative at working with wood; another may be a physics professor good at remembering formulas. Both of them are intelligent in their own way. This is called left brain (llogical and factual) and right brain (Random, non-verbal, visual and emotional) theory, of course not scientifically proved.

Intelligence is acknowledged in nine fields. Parents should recognise their child's interest and develop parallel interest in one of them along with their education. The fields of interest are: Mathematical, Naturalist (plants and animals), Musical, Spatial (Picture), Linguistic (Word Smart), philosophical, Interpersonal, Bodily-Kinesthetic (Athletes, dancers, surgeons,) Intra-personal (capacity to understand oneself). Cleverness can also be categorised again into two broadly: Fluid and Crystallised.



FLUID INTELLIGENCE:

A child's knowledge is zero before joining the kindergarten. He learns alphabets. How *fast* he learns is his fluid intelligence. It is all about the *time* he takes to *acquire* the new knowledge.

Fluid intelligence is essential at the time of schooling or learning a new skill like chess, typing, short-hand, computer, music, dance, or while joining a new profession.

CRYSTALLISED INTELLIGENCE:

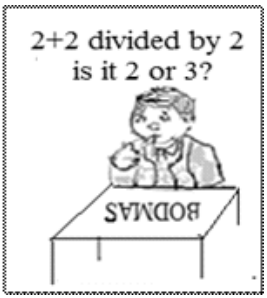
1. 'Intra' means within. A scientist working alone in his lab at midnight and a scholar sitting in a library develop knowledge on their own.

2. 'Interpersonal intelligence' deals with communication, public speaking, marketing and diplomacy required for insurance agents, medical representatives, politicians etc.

3. 'Emotional intelligence' is the composure to work under difficult and demanding situations. How you react when you lose your passport on a foreign soil is your emotional balance.

Acquiring wisdom should be as enthusiastic as playing a sport. I pose a question to Chartered accountants while discussing joint family partitions:

A had 5 and B 3 chapattis. A, B and C ate equally. C paid Rs. 8 for his share of meal. How should A and B divide the money between them? The answer is: A should take 7 rupees and B 1. Did you find it strange? Find it out how? #



Parents often complain that their child is intelligent, got 70% marks until recent past, but his performance is deteriorating. The reason is lack of intake. Suppose the kid did not study well but scored '70%' in seventh class; and only 20% in eighth, it means that (even without studying) his capacity could sustain up to the seventh standard. He did not 'add up' anything to enhance his *fluid intelligence*. Due to this reason, some students who score well to get a seat in IITs and fail after that.

Knowledge:

Knowledge is what that is left in you after you complete your education*. We derive knowledge through six sources. Shabda (Listening), Drishya (Seeing), Pariseelana (Observing) Anumana (Questioning), Anubhava (Experiencing), Yochana (Thinking).

If you are not able to apply the knowledge practically, you are called 'a learned person' (Panditha) rather than 'intellectual' (Medhavi). If you can answer what is $(a+ b)^2$ you are knowledgeable, but if you cannot respond to what is $(b + a)^2$ you are not intelligent.

The interviewer asked a football player about the history of the game. The candidate answered: "The history of Football dates back to 250 B.C. When a witch or wicked died, the villagers used to go on kicking the skull to the next village and leave it at its outskirts to keep the evil away from their territory. In turn the villagers of the adjacent hamlet booted it back. There was turmoil, chaos and sometimes bloodshed." The candidate said. The interviewer was thrilled with the answer and encouraged the candidate to continue.

"Having found this more interesting as a game rather than an act of brutality, people replaced skulls with animal bladders and started playing. As the bladders were wearing out fast, they covered them with animal skins. This was the origin of the game of football. Soon it became so popular that it was banned during First World War for three reasons. Firstly the army stopped practicing archery as football fever gulped the country like mass hysteria. Secondly, people played in four road junctions smashing the glass panels and road side malls. Most importantly the priests warned the king as the youth stopped attending the churches playing nonstop football on Sundays."

Happy with his answer, the interviewer asked the second question: "Teams A, B were playing for one rupee per goal. 'A' scored 3 goals, but B team won 3 rupees. How many total goals were scored ?

Awareness about football is *knowledge*. Solving above question is mathematical intelligence. (Answer: Total 9 goals. B 6 and A 3. B won three rupees.)

General knowledge:

Long ago I received a letter: 'Sir, whom should I consult when a money-order does not reach the concerned person and there is no proper response from the post office? In my college post office I saw a medico affixing *revenue* stamp on the envelope. My classmate said her lifetime desire is to go to Goa by flight but does not have a *passport* or *visa*. Even I don't know whether I require visa to go to Goa. Please write a book enlightening these basic issues.'

His worry was perfect. These basic topics must be made compulsory in the school syllabus. Our educational curriculum unfortunately aims at teaching engineering, medicine and commerce but ignores important aspects like 'respecting values, civic responsibilities, culture, arts, about our legends' etc.

It is disgusting that many students do not know the difference between a violin and veena, assembly and parliament. How nice would it be, if five marks are allotted for ironing cloths, washing dishes and cooking in intermediate practical exams? Looking funny? Once introduced, all corporate colleges would incorporate kitchen labs and start giving training to their students. Is it not better than the knowledge about phylum Annelida and Mollusca in 9th class for a student who would later become a bank or government employee?

The younger generation is not exposed to physical trainings and cannot run for a mile. Military, Scout and NCC is compulsory in some countries. It helps to realise the value of freedom and belongingness to the country, than engaging in *bandhs* and *hartals*. Staying away from parents teaches psychological independency and ability to confront trivial problems.

Going back to the relation between intelligence and knowledge: Tell in 'minutes' how much time an eagle would take to descend straight at 2.5 meters per second from a lighthouse of 400 meters, to catch a fish 300 meters away in the water?

If you know the Pythagoras Theorem you are *knowledgeable*. If you are aware that the said theorem is to be applied to solve the above problem you are *intelligent*. If your answer is 200 seconds, you may be correct mathematically, but you are *hyperactive*. You are asked to tell the answer in minutes (3.33) and not in seconds.

Empty pots make much noise*.Wise people eliminate the complicated alternatives and give the 'simplest answer' in spite of their kaleidoscopic knowledge. Real wisdom is making things simpler.

For a question in physics to describe how you determine the height of a skyscraper with a barometer, a student at the University of Copenhagen replied, 'Tie a string to the barometer and lower it. The length of the string is the height of the building'.

The most original and simple answer irritated the examiner and he failed the student. In an appeal, the arbitrator judged that the answer was indeed correct, but wanted the student to give another alternative based on 'principles of physics'.

He was given five minutes time. The student was in deep thought. On being reminded that the time is running out, the student said he could not select from a bunch of extremely relevant answers.

While asked to quicken, he said, "Drop the barometer from the top and measure the time. The height of the building can then be worked out from the formula H = 0.5g multiplied by 'T' SQUARED'." *And then he continued, "Or you can swing the barometer first at the ground and then on the roof. The height is worked out by the difference in the gravitational restoring force T=2 pi sq. root (1/g)"*

To the stunned examiner, the student further explained "If the sun is shining, compare the shadows of barometer and the building. The orthodox answer is, measure the air pressure with the barometer at the roof and at the ground level and convert the millibars into feet."

The student was Niels Bohr, the first scientist from Denmark to win the Nobel Prize in Physics. He developed the theory of atom structure and described it as a miniature solar system with electrons revolving around the heavy nucleus. He is considered as 'father of atomic structure'.

Knowledge that is not necessary is called *hollow* knowledge. A person is supposed to remember around 5 lakh concepts at any given time. We cram our neuron space in the brain with more hollow information like films, actors, serials and other unnecessary stuff.

Geographical knowledge:

I explained to the final year M. Tech students of a highly accredited professional college the topography of our country with the help of a map, the three seas and the Himalayan Mountains.

Later I requested six students to stand facing the Bay of Bengal and asked them to turn towards the Arabian Sea. Only two of them could turn *backwards*. There were two civil engineers also among them. This is not a complaint about their geographical knowledge but the common sense.

Meanwhile let me also conclude the positive and intelligent aspect of some of the students from the same college. When asked to name the mountains that they would be facing by standing towards north, a girl replied 'Vindhyas'.

I was startled with her dazzling spontaneity. More interesting was… another boy questioned, 'In which country am I standing?' When I said 'India', he again asked "Is it North India or South India?"

Genius is nothing but inflamed enthusiasm. Picasso said he feels tired without work. Take pleasure in going through ancient literature, solving mathematical puzzles, complicated legal laws and read science books of authors like Isaac Asimov. It makes you feel that *acquiring knowledge* is also as amusing as *watching an entertainer.*

Parents and teachers should help the children develop insight into science, nature, history, geography, anthropology and philosophy. They should lay foundation to nurture enthusiasm in children by clarifying their doubts even if they are silly.

A child asked his father how astronauts scratch their nose when space suit is on. The father could not stumble upon the answer but did not leave it there. He wrote letters to five astronauts and surprisingly all responded.

Wendy Lawrence, who flew on a 16-day mission, replied that an astronaut wears the suit three times only during the journey: upon launch, at re-entry and during spacewalk. William Pogue wrote "Not only did my nose but my ears also itch. I tried rubbing my nose against the helmet but it didn't help much. The best thing was to think something else."

Interesting book:

Realising people's enthusiasm about astronauts, William Pogue wrote a funny but informative book, "How do you go to the Bathroom in Space?" In the fore word of the book he says, "Knowledge is the power, but enthusiasm is its switch".

Rational thinking:

"Wear our diamond for enormous fortunes" says the advertisement girl. You would find the same girl uttering the same dialogue for years, without her wearing the fortune stone and becoming something big.

Think rationally. Can a spoonful of powder make you taller? If that is true, Chinese and Japanese would have made it a national product by now. Before spending few thousands on such fake medicines understand the stupid logic behind the advertisement. How can the growth of a bone or a gap between bones make you taller? Does it not lead you to an operation theatre?

When I discussed this subject with a former secretary of Rational Thinkers association he said, "Yes. I used to fight tooth and nail against these pseudo sciences. Now I am not that much into it. I realised that these beliefs give people temporary relief. A man with enormous stress changes an alphabet in his name. It is like giving a sleeping tablet to a patient suffering from acute pain. A man wears a ring and feels comfortable. He is paying not for the solution, but for the mental relief. Who is happy? A rationalist or a believer..?"

I didn't argue. May be escapism is better than agony. But a rational thinker tries to eliminate the problem; whereas an occult believer runs to escape from the problem. But I thought, instead of fighting with those who cash on the rudimentary weakness of people, it is better to educate the innocent masses.

Rational thinking dates back to Socrates, the guru of Plato who was the mentor of Aristotle. These three great people established importance of logic, philosophy and mathematics in our day to day life. The universe is full of perplexities. They proved that '*We may not know the reason behind everything, but nothing exists without rationale.*'

Many doubts can be explained with logic.

What is the purpose of wisdom teeth? Why do our fingers differ in length? Why do babies blink eyes less often? Why do cows often lick inside nostrils with their tongues? Why do we cry at happy endings? How do bugs appear in flour when a bottle is tightly capped? Why does dogs eat standing while cats sit down to eat?

The Stone Age man masticated hard raw-meat with teeth at the back of the mouth. When our primitive ancestors evolved soft diet (with their wisdom), the purpose of wisdom teeth diminished. At present they serve a purpose only for our dentists.

Our fingers are different because human hand with even fingers would be less versatile. All the fingers would be of the same length when you catch a ball . It is an evolutionary adaptation for swinging on trees. If our little finger is longer, it would get hurt more often.

The purpose of blinking is to spread the water evenly over the surface of the eyes to reduce the irritation caused by dust. Do you know that babies don't have tears in the first month of their birth? That's why babies don't blink eyes often.

Cows have nasolabial glands located under the epidermis that produces a watery secretion which helps to digest food. Secondly, cows frequently endure respiratory infections and the discharges are irritating. They don't have hand kerchiefs.

There are no 'tears of happiness' according to psychologists. Then why do our eyes become wet when all the scattered members of the hero family reunion at the end of the film? The psychologists say that we hold back the urge to cry in our daily life. While we witness happy endings, the energy that is used to suppress the grief is released in the form of tears. This is why children hardly cry at happy or tragedy endings. Have you ever seen any child weeping watching Devdas?

Insects infect food in the form of eggs before it is packed. Cats steal and eat secretly and are more secured. Hence they eat leisurely. Dogs have to fight with other dogs to protect their food. Hence they are in a hurry to complete eating.

Lateral thinking:

In a viva voce, a medico identified a femur as a human thigh bone. "How many of them do you have?" the examiner asked. He replied "Two". The examiner passed him and failed 3 others who said, 'Three' 'Four' and 'Five'. The students preferred an appeal and won. How? #

Lateral thinking is an 'out of box' approach, enhancing the thought-process one step ahead. It is moving 'beyond our initial response' and solving the problem from an unpredictable angle.

In every situation, we think that we are in possession of *all* the facts and factors, ways and means. But we are not.

When an apple fell from the tree, Newton thought 'why should it fall down, why not go up?' (This happened before the discovery of earth's gravitational force). It is one of the examples of lateral thinking, which sets out to challenge our illusions. Here is my first story published in a children's magazine when I was 18.

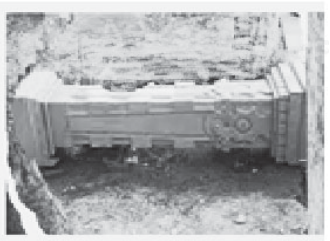
Unable to find charity, a beggar prays, 'O God! I am starved. Be kind. I promise to share half of what I get today'. To his amazement, he finds a bag containing two hundred rupees. He happily spends the entire amount, but is sleepless afterwards with the fear of guilt and breach of promise to God.

Then he gets an idea? goes to the temple and prays, "God..! Give me another two hundred and I promise half of it'. He gets nothing. He sleeps happily thanking God for adjusting his past dues.

Parallel thinking is a creative approach, using ideas that are not attainable by traditional thinking. When 'lift' was invented, people were irritated with its slow pace.

An Engineer discovered that it was not the pace; but the quietness, odour and exasperation of standing close to each other was irritating the people. Mirrors on three sides and a soft music inside solved the problem.

Another engineer explored concept of capsule lifts outside malls and hotels that not only save the work space, but give a pleasant experience of 'moving'.



Few old depleted heavy pillars were obstructing the pathway in a college. The principal engaged labour to dismantle them and throw the garbage out of the compound. They demanded heavy price. A lecturer had an idea. He asked students to dig a pit by their side, push them and burry underneath. The job was done in few hours.

You notice three people on a stormy night in a forest: a doctor, who saved your life when you were a kid taking you to hospital in his car and donating his blood; a 90 year old asthma patient requiring immediate hospitalisation otherwise would die; and a charismatic person whom you dream to meet in your lifetime.

What do you do if you have only one seat in your car?

About 80% 'Sentimentalists' prefer to save the old lady, 10% 'realists' like to take the doctor, and 10% opportunists want their ideal he/she by their side. Lateral thinking advocates different win/ win move. How about giving your car to the doctor to join the old lady in the hospital and spending the beautiful stormy night with your dream girl / boy in the forest in a rainy night?

(The answer for the chapatti question: C paid Rs 8 for his 1/3rd share. So the cost of 8 chapattis is 24 (Rs 3 per each one). A has 15 rupees *worth* and B has 9. They gave 7:1 to C respectively).

Spontaneity vs. hyperactivity:

The teacher asked, "When is your birthday". The student answered: "13th October". The teacher questioned: "Which year?" The mischievous student said : "Every year". The more experienced teacher smiled, "I am not asking the anniversaries. When is your birth day?"

Spontaneity includes emotional balance, not to panic in critical situations, apply intelligence in correct perspective and to take a wise decision. Your reflex actions, communication skills and spontaneity are more tested for high-profile jobs than your subject matter.

According to Aristotle, spontaneity is 'an intellect that decides what to do in a situation supported by the five external senses (like colour, sound and taste)'.

I was a panel member in an interview board where a question was asked, 'What would you do if you find one early morning that your gender has changed permanently?'

The question is intended to test the spontaneity, and reaction to the unexpected question. Many blushed. Some candidates said they would go for shopping, ornaments, dresses, change their existing friends and few girls said that it would be an opportunity to zoom fast on motorbikes, need not answer elders for late night-outs etc.

One girl's reply shook us all. To make it more interesting, I would dramatise her answer. She said, "My father suffers from rheumatic pains and cannot step down unless I massage his legs every day in the early morning. When I find my gender changed, I will run to him up and cry in amazement, 'Daddy…! I was feeling desolate as who would do this to you after my marriage. I am happy that God listened to my prayers."

Psychologists regard spontaneity as distinct from the cognitive abilities measured by standardised intelligence tests. It is often considered to be a trait that can be developed by experience and wit. Acting swiftly or answering with a punch is called *spontaneity* whereas committing mistakes with an intention to be quick is called *hyperactivity*. When you are overconfident, you tend to be hyperactive. We notice this phenomenon more in children and youth.

When I ask the below question in my semirars, almost all the students say either 'No ball...' or 'Wide...' and later realise that it is a wrong answer.

It was the last wicket partnership. A and B were on 94 each. Having to make 7 runs in last 2 balls, they scored 12 runs and won the match. Both batsmen were on 100 at the end. How could this be possible? There are two different answers.

(identifying the thigh bone: The boy answered 3 including the bone he was holding. The others two students were pregnant).

Skill:

Skill is the ability to perform, associated with practice and experience, clubbed with intelligence and knowledge. It is not considered as inborn gift normally. Skill is required in every daily chore. A person's efficiency can be tested in the following areas:

1. Cooking: It tastes wonderful when some people cook. They know the *exact ratios* of the ingredients and *timing*. They know for how much time to boil or fry and whether to be *boil before frying* and *to fry before boiling*. Good cooking is the combination of intelligence (permutations and combinations), imagination (not going by conventional methods), creativity (in arranging), and above all interest patience, passion and belongingness.

2. Mental games: A skilful player does not spend much time wavering. In the game of rummy, the player has only two options, whether to opt for the discarded card or to go for the pack. If a person thinks for long intervals (except in few critical occasions) unable to choose between the two, he might not be good at taking decisions.

3. Driving: If your friend sitting by your side trembles with tension, you are definitely a *bad* driver. If you are more scratch-prone with your vehicle, you are an *average* driver. If you drive a car without frequently applying brakes and mostly operate on accelerator, you are a *good* driver. If your co-passenger forgets that he is in a vehicle and is securely engaged in a conversation, you are a *better* driver. If you know when to honk, how much distance to be maintained from the vehicle ahead of you and when to overtake, you are the *best* driver..!

4. Romance: Romance also requires intelligence, emotional smartness, communication skills, understanding body language, comprehending other partner's ecstatic points and the ways of soothing. The main pleasure of romance is in making the other person happy. *Do exactly the same to your mate that you expect from him/her.* Romance is like walking in a garden. The deeper you go, the more you realise its untapped beauty. If a person feels that he is the best in romance, he is in illusion. He is wandering near the gate with the feeling that he had seen everything inside.

Common sense:

Common-sense is an inborn quality but develops with experience. A house wife said, "My right hand glove wears out fast. When I have equal number of them, I simply reverse my left hand glove and equate the numbers."

Buddha said, "People try to influence you including me. But believe nothing, no matter where you read it, no matter even if I said it, written in your religious books, on the authority of your teachers and elders, in traditions handed down for many generations; unless it agrees with your own reason and common sense."

Animals do not have common sense, but have a sense different from human beings. A sheep is able to sense a wolf far-away, not by the colour of its fur and its howl, but may be by its distant odour and other sensible attributes. Human beings do not possess this but their intellect is on a higher plane and is called *common sense*.

You will be surprised that for a simple question involving common sense, "If a cat jumps from 2 feet, it breaks two legs. How many legs another cat would break, if it jumps from 3 feet" and asked to choose among three options '2 / 3 / can't say' around half of the people reply '2 legs' and some say 3, whereas the correct answer is 'can't tell'.

Common sense is nothing to do with being brilliant. You need not be too intelligent to have common sense. Bed time stories, quiz and puzzles improve zeal in children and enhance their common sense.

There are ten crows on a floor*, and one is killed with a banging pistol. How many would remain? Choose from the three answers: a) Zero b) One c) Can't say*

Your answer 'zero' may be wrong as the dead lying on the floor is also a crow. If your answer is 'one' it may not be correct, in case the other crows take away the dead body to eat. There is also a chance of two or three crows dying due to heart attack with exploding pistol sound. There can be one or two deaf crows sleeping or a newly married crow weeping. There can also be two crows in love, not in a mood to listen to the outside sounds☺. So the correct answer is 'can't say'.

Maturity:

Wisdom ultimately leads to maturity. Maturity is 'how a person talks and behaves *rightly* in a given situation. This response is determined neither by one's age nor intuitiveness but with wisdom'. It is the level of tolerance in embarrassing situations. It is not talking big, but understanding small things.

Be a student. Always learn. But don't forget that continuous learning does not mean forgetting existing knowledge.

Maturity growing with age is called natural maturity. A child can identify only the burning odour. As age progresses, he distinguishes among the burning smell of a paper, cloth, milk or plastic. Apart from age, maturity develops through several sources like environment, people, intelligence, experience and education. A politician ripens as a leader with turbulences. A broker evolves as a matured bull or bear after facing financial tornadoes.

We feel sometimes that we are more matured and our thoughts are more balanced. It may not be maturity, but just that our earlier opinion has changed and the present one seems more reasonable, healthier and above all *convenient*...! Maturity is not talking when our silence is appreciated.

A kid left in a forest is deprived of wisdom, knowledge and maturity and cultivates animal qualities. A student among vagabonds, a person in the company of gamblers adopts their qualities.

Identifying own core-competence, developing responsibility, distancing from the factors hampering progress; deriving pleasure from habits that help reach the goal and realising the value of time… are the steps to maturity.

We discussed about the Shadguna Daaridriya (six evils) in the first chapter. Keeping distance from anger, anguish and greed is the ultimate maturity. Doing the same thing what you expect from the other person to make you happy… is maturity.

If a person claims that he is 'matured', it is peak of his *immaturity.* Adi Shankaracharya said he had been wandering what to do to enhance his mental maturity. Amazing modesty..! Isn't it?

Stupidity:

'Stupidity' is an antonym to intellect. It is doing the irrational things and expecting a different outcome. This word is labelled in 16th century from Roman culture for buffoonery and lack of intelligence.

Two people involving in an unending argument are also come under this category. Both of them believe that their opinion is correct. A teacher argues with another, who gave full marks to the answer '18 = 6 x 6'. Both do not realise that they are standing on the opposite sides of a table ('9 x 9 = 81'). An old Chinese story tells about these ludicrous monkeys. Many psychological theories were evolved on this story*.

*Keep five monkeys in a cage and hang a banana. When they try to grab it, gush out water with heavy force. Repeat the same whenever a monkey attempts again. Soon, whenever a monkey tries to catch the fruit, all other monkeys plunge on it. Now remove one monkey from the cage and replace it with another. Naturally the new monkey tries to get the banana. Don't spurt water now. Even then, the other monkeys grab him back till it stops attempting. Next, remove another and replace it with a new one. When the newcomer starts to reach for the banana, the first newcomer 'also' takes part in the attack. Replace the 3rd, 4th and the 5th original monkey. The four monkeys don't even realise why they are doing so, while pulling the 5th monkey down. Why? Because that is the way it has always been with the society and politics. Many agitators participating in movements, pelting stones, committing suicides, neither know the benefits nor the negative effects.**

Why few people send wishes from their mobiles on festive days without signing their name? Many of the celebrities do not even bother to know who sent them. They simply delete the message.

Sending messages for every known person is a mania. Many don't realise that it is a waste of time and money, when the other person does not bother to even reciprocate.

Life is a game:

If life is a football match, you are the captain and your strengths are your players. Your weak points are your rival team players. Goals are your targets.

'Approaches' are your *forward* players. When you win the game, the next match with different opponents would be ready. May be it is 'earning money' or 'planning to get an award'.

Design different strategies..! Be an aggressive campaigner of truth, be shrewd in business, cool in court cases and intelligent in diplomatic matters. Emotional balance is your 'full-back', a wall to protect from your rival players like anxiety and tension. The more powerful your defence player is, the more you are stress-free.

Sometimes the opposite team dominates and situation goes out of your hand. It is *crisis*. Then all co-players like your experience, education and wisdom should rush to assist the goalkeeper. If you commit a fault, it leads to a penalty kick. You are one goal short.

Sometimes your players rush forward too adventurously and fail to safeguard the goal. Don't sink with depression. Failure is an experience. Don't stop the game. The ability to judge when to move forward or defend back is called 'insight'.

Go without distractions while proceeding forward. Play with concentration, keep eye on the ball, not on night dinner. If life is a two-hour football game, enjoy it happily and play it truthfully. Goal is a bonus.

'When you just think about nothing except winning every point, it's amazing to know how little there is to do with the game' said Andrew Agassi, the master of the Tennis. Applies to life.

Work gives satisfaction.
Thinking bestows wisdom.
Humour provides pleasure.
Love accords completeness.
Sport blesses youthfulness.
Time shows the beauty of stars.
Allot some time for prayer.
It gives meaning to life *

THIRD STEP :

HE THREW ME OUT FROM HIS LITTLE CIRCLE

I DREW A BIGGER CIRLCE AND INVITED HIM IN.

THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP

IN WHOSE PRESENCE
YOU CAN BEHAVE
AS IF YOU ARE ALONE
HE/SHE IS YOUR BEST FRIEND.

Some people touch our lives and leave a mark in our hearts and we never ever remain the same. Do you have such a friend? Or are you such a friend to anyone?

Since earlier stages of civilisation, friendship stood as a survival instinct to keep mankind together against menaces; and to facilitate the continuation of the human species. Philosophy, Art and Literature have no survival value, in the sense that they are not necessary for humankind like science and medicine, but certainly 'add' delight. Similarly relationship is not a necessity, but adds colour to life. It is of four types.

1. Family and neighbourhood relationship,
2. Common interests such as painting, literature, alcohol, religion, social service etc.
3. Business and professional relationships.
4. Interest towards pets, birds and nature.

KINDS OF FRIENDSHIPS : Friendship involves sympathy, empathy, honesty, understanding and willingness to go to each other for emotional support. Our needs of affection are mostly unconscious and include: affiliation (spending time), nurture (taking care) and play (having fun).

1. Face book and internet friendship: Without knowing the facts and details of the opposite person but still feeling the spirit of friendship.
2. Fair-weather friendship: Supporting without any pain-taking efforts. Just courtesy calls. Ninety percent of our acquaintances (neighbours, distant relatives etc.) fall under this category.
3. True friendship: Believing that friendship is a win-win move and giving/taking psychological and materialistic support in difficulties.
4. Best friends: Placing friend's interest above yours without boundaries and frontiers. It is also called altruism.

Qualities of a good friend:

Do your friends do harm or good ? Friendship in Sanskrit is '*snehitha'* and *hita* means 'good advice'. But in today's intrusive society, friendship is attributed to gossiping, 'sms'ing, and internet chat.

- Does your association benefit a friend other than for watching movies and gossiping? Do you discuss what you don't like in him?
- Could you pull a friend out from a bad habit and guide to a better future?
- Do your friends advise you on your prolonged cell phone conversations and frequent visits to restaurants and night-outs?
- Do they discourage you against rash driving, smoking, drinks and gambling?
- Can you list out atleast one good quality of your friend that influenced you?
- Did you ever tell your friend, spouse, parents, children the traits you like in them and what you don't like?

A true friend understands your values and discipline. He ensures he takes appointment before meeting you and never encroaches into your time however close you may be to him.

A good friend:

1. Listens and limits his arguments to a point.
2. Never gives unnecessary suggestions unless asked.
3. Does not give suggestions to problems that have no solutions. He knows that he is just listening to you because you get relieved by pouring out your sorrows.
4. Never utters words like, "*I should not have told you but'… 'He would kill me if I tell you but I am telling this…*"
5. Never lets you completely depend on him emotionally. He knows that he is doing harm by not allowing his ally develop emotional balance.
6. Never flatters but compliments. Complimenting is an art. "You look nice in this dress" may mean 'you don't look good in other dresses'. 'This dress wonderfully suits you' is a better expression.

Does friendship require all these tricks? No. They are not tricks, but personality traits required in every relation. A person's ego (as well as yours) is reflected in phone conversations, correspondence, open meetings, behaviour, actions and business affairs. If you want to impress others, understand their ego and its impact on 'your' ego. Nothing blocks your insight more than your own ego. Treat the other person *the way they want to be treated*. In critical situations guard their ego by minimising the damage.

Don't feel sorry if your friend stops talking and distances himself from you. Or sometimes your friend gets acquainted with someone else and disassociates with you. Naturally it would be quite depressing. Many teenagers, particularly girls complain about this. But don't you think you are fortunate to have such a selfish fellow leaving you?

A latest survey conducted by an American university revealed that a person two decades ago had on an average three people in whom he could confide matters. Now the number dropped to two. It also revealed that one in four persons had no close confidantes at all. However the percentage of people confiding only in family, increased from 57 to 80 per cent. The main reason for the unnatural phenomenon is pursuit of isolation with books, TV, chat, work-load, lack of time and most importantly deprival of faith

Your best friend:

People say, *"A friend is a person in whose presence you can kick off your shoes, unmindful of your hair. If you do not have a friend of this kind, you have only acquaintances"*, but who is a real friend?

Epicurus says, "Never ask who your real friend is. Ask 'Am I a real friend to someone?' That is the right question. Why are you worried about others - whether they are friends to you or not? Making friendship with the idea of using people is a wrong step from the very beginning. If you have to share something, whosoever is ready to share with you, is a friend. It is not about a friend coming to your rescue or not when you are in danger. That is irrelevant - he may come, may not come, but if he doesn't come, don't complain. If you are friendly with a dog or even to a tree, they would be friendly to you. First, be friendly with <u>your</u> existence."

Associate with a special person with whom you could spend most of your time and have great influence. Understand his weaknesses; change 'him' with discipline or even by threat. Make him the best. Do you know who the friend is? **It's 'You'..!**

Who can be your best friend other than you? If you cannot change him, who can?

"Darling..! I love you more than anybody." the boy says in a soft voice holding her hand. "I am lucky" the girl says with eyes half closed. They talk, talk and talk. As the dark shades thicken in the park, she wants to return home.

"Please..! Stay back. Abhi dil bhara nahi…" pleads the boy. And the sweet talk goes on… about her pimples, gaining weight etc. The girl says ruefully "I am not getting good marks these days…"

"Reduce watching TV; don't chat in cell phone with others except with me" he suggests. She sneezes while he is advising.

"Oh. Never ever I have witnessed such an amazing sneeze..!" he admires. They both fall into conversation again.

What do we get from this? When you are in love: 1. You want to be with your beloved every minute 2. Will watch and assess your companion's requirements 3. Want to counsel continuously and 4. Appreciate even the sneeze.

Assume Yama, the lord of death appearing at this point pronouncing that he has to take 'one' between them and the choice is theirs. You know the answer. Both unanimously say, 'Take the other'.

Nobody would be willing to sacrifice life unless extremely sentimental or is madly in love. **YOU LOVE YOURSELF MORE THAN ANYBODY ELSE IN THE WORLD.** Then consider these questions: How much time are you spending in solitude conversing 'with you' without a television or a book, as you would love staying hours together with your beloved in a park? 2. Do you constantly assess yourself, as you observe the weight and pimples of your lover? 3. Do you pat your good qualities as you appreciate even the sneeze of your beloved? If so, what are they? 4. As you suggest improvements to your lover, do you give suggestions to your own-self regularly and follow them?

Trust:

Relationships are built on trust. How many people in this world believe you totally? You will be surprised… None! Somewhere sometime you might have lied at least once with almost everybody. And most of the time they know that you had lied.

Your friends trust you by your attitude, principles and values. The three realms of 'trust' are their Faith (in your talent), Truthfulness (by your actions) and Intimacy (through your words and emotions). But it is not necessary to be always truthful in situations where the 'truth' puts you (or the other person) in an embarrassing situation, but be utmost truthful to the maximum to the person who trusts you.

A boy had a tin of cookies and the girl sweets. The boy offered all his cookies in exchange for her sweets and she agreed. In the process he concealed some cookies. The girl slept peacefully that night but the boy couldn't, suspecting whether the girl had also hidden some sweets.

*Moral: If you don't give your cent per cent in a relationship, you keep doubting whether the other person has given you his full.**

Arguments lead to quarrels and even breakups. What do you do when your friend doesn't accept your argument, but you know you are correct? Do you walk away? Keep talking till you are proved right? Throw something? Develop a headache listening to the other person's squabble and so on? Feel depressed because you cannot outsmart him/her with your power of argument? Or do you listen to his point of view, for maybe you are wrong? Many arguments are pointless. They are not for changing the other person for betterment. It is just to prove your dominance.

Relationships are based on emotions. How do you react to a letter or E- mail that had hurt you badly? Do you hit back violently, or send a humorous rejoinder or a polite reply? Whatever you do, don't respond immediately. Let your emotions cool down. Act. Don't react..! Respond..!

In movies, the hero fights for truth. Villain also fights, but for what he thinks is the truth. You are not a hero always and can be wrong sometimes. Don't extend a quarrel to permanent rivalry. Fleeting quarrels are of course different. They give 'pep'. There is something wrong if a couple had not fought at least once during a year.

Eight types of friends:

Good: When a friend explains you a consept from a subject you are benefited. He also gains while recalling. Good friends discuss lessons in leisure time.

Authoritarian: If your friend dominates you every time, defeats your personality, mesmerises you to surrender to his charisma, makes you feel inferior, decides your choices, tastes and even your dresses, he is authoritarian.

Exploiters: Your exploiter friend borrows a book or money. You can't demand it back. Playing on your weakness he does not return it.

Thieves: Your friend steals your money. Kleptomaniacs are different. They are habitual stealers. Discard both.

Bandits: when a person steals, your loss is equal to his gain to the exact amount. If he destroys the photo of your mother along with the purse to hide the proof, your loss is greater than his gain. He is a bandit. Bandits kill innocent travellers after robbing them, just to destroy the evidence. Army generals, who ruthlessly kill surrendered soldiers for a medal, are also bandits.

Spiders: Two girls stand nearby a window watching the rain. One pronounces, 'It's raining'. The other confirms 'Yes, heavy down pour'. The first girl declares, "We will get drenched if we go out now". The second one says, 'yes, Knee deep water'. Both are sharing an already known fact..! Companionship is surely for sharing the feelings, but are deemed to be among spiders if they are spending most of the time gossiping.

Crooks: Crooks talk bad about you in your absence. In turn when you know this, you get hurt. Thieves and bandits gain at least something for their acts. But crooks spread rumours and hurt others with their irresponsible comments to gain nothing. They are supposed to be suffering from identity crisis, inferiority complex and a bit of sadism unknowingly.

Spoilers: Spoilers are those who inculcate smoking, drinking, porno-watching etc. under the guise of 'thrill'. They have earthly definitions of 'enjoying life' and program your brain accordingly. They captivate you and make you feel heroic. You believe that you are the most fortunate to have them as friends. They have the knack of bringing you down to their level, by instilling laziness and bad habits.

Spoilers, crooks, spiders and exploiters are the most attractive and friendly. It is not easy for you to detangle yourself once you fall into their trap and have tasted the escape route. Gamblers and drunkards prefer the company of their own sect. It is not easy not to be influenced by this sect of people in the transitional stage of life.

Be in the company of successful people if you want to succeed. Peer influence has such a great effect that even a bright student becomes an escapist and miscreant in bad company and vice versa. For this reason many rural students lose their earlier high ranks after joining urban hostels and 'enjoying' newly earned freedom.

To focus on the significance of peer influence, I would like to quote my son's batch of six friends. The kids used to meet in our house every weekend. I have seen them growing. To my knowledge, nobody nurtured the habit of drinking, smoking etc. One is now the Director at UBS, another is Managing Director of Nagarjuna Fertilizers & Chemicals, third one is Partner at Ernst & Young, next one grew to the ranks of Chief Risk Officer of Citigroup and the last boy is the Jt. Managing Director of Zen Securities Ltd.

Incelism: All of us experience a state of loneliness at times in spite of having a lot of friends. But it is a temporary phase. Long-term depression is called 'Incelism'.

"Everybody except me has friends. I am socially unskilled and something is wrong with me. I am not really much of a good friend either. For some masochistic reason I go on Face book every day and look at the pictures from all the people I know. They seem to be having fun, going to lots of places and hanging out with friends. I can't even talk right. The other day I tried to crack a joke with an acquaintance and all I got was, 'What if'? It just increases my loneliness and feelings of sadness. I must be a bad person."

This is the revelation of a girl suffering from Incelism. It is not that only the shy and introverts feel lonely, but extroverts who joke, laugh, and who have lot of friends may also feel isolated inwardly. Some people, though they are talking and joking in a crowd, don't feel that they are the part of the group. Loneliness is different from solitude about which we have already discussed.

How many friends one should have?

Relations arise out of 'need' ranging from *physical* assistance to *emotional* support. Opinions differ on how many friends a person should have. Each individual has a different taste. Some people like to have large circle, while few prefer isolation

A sick person doubtlessly feels secured if more people visit him. To have a large circle of well-wishers is indeed a great joy..! But it also becomes his reciprocal responsibility to attend 'their' social gatherings. In the process he would be spending most of his time either attending marriages, funerals or consoling people in the hospitals. This is feasible only to a politician for votes, or a retired person with time at his disposal, but not for a person in the process of building his career. This is where one has to decide the number of friends.

A girl with excellent academic record failed prelims. Reason was simple but proved costly. Many of her classmates got married during the season and she attended every marriage setting her studies aside. She was there even at their betrothal ceremonies.

A director and a film hero become great friends during shooting time. After the release they meet very rarely may be only when they work together again.

Leaders and business tycoons have only associates relating to their profession, but not friends. Time is the main constraint. **As you grow up on the ladder of success, you don't have friends.** If friendship is for sharing feelings and rescue each other when in a problem, the Prime Minister cannot share his feelings leisurely, still many people come to his rescue if he is in problems. If friends are for attending the last ritual, thousands follow a selfless leader to the burial ground. They are not his friends but followers.

Winners make friends only with success.

When your association is casual or obligatory, don't give false impression acting hypocritically and too friendly. It is ok to let the other party know that you are only discharging your responsibility.

I knew a star behaving too friendly with fans in a foreign locale enjoying home-made dinners and accepting gifts, but not bothering to even give time when they visited India.

Perceptions:

*Two fire-fighters went to a stream to wash their faces after extinguishing a forest fire. One of the firemen had his face smudged with black ash. Other man was clean. Who would wash his face first? Not the man with dirty face, but the person who sees the grubby face opposite to him..!**

Excellent example of perception! We see the world with our glasses to form an opinion. We never try to enter into others' shoes.

'PERCEPTION' IS HOW YOU VIEW THE WORLD AND 'PERSONALITY' IS HOW YOU APPEAR TO THE WORLD.

Perception is one of the oldest terms in psychology. It means "Processing of information based on our knowledge before reacting". It can be simplified like input → process →output. The famous quote, 'Is the glass half-empty or half-full?' demonstrates this concept. Develop good perception instead of blaming parents, circumstances, poverty and lack of 'something' for your failure. Continuous amendment of perception is the mantra for success.

Ambiguity of perception helps in biological mimicry. A peculier European Peacock butterflies bear 'eye patterned wings' resembling the eyes of a dangerous predator that terrify their hunter birds.

The cosy two-berth air conditioned rail coupe was full of alcohol smell when I entered in. A person inside was eating an idly packed in a newspaper. His fingers were trembling. The first question occurred to me was 'how could he be here?'

Unable to sit next to him, I crept onto my upper berth early and started preparing notes for my next day's seminar. I woke up in the middle of the night disturbed by the knock on the door by the attendant. My intoxicated co-passenger was unable to discriminate between the switches and pressed the call-button he stead of putting off the light. I ventilated my anger on the innocuous attendant.

As I was to sleep again, my co-passenger woke me as he was unable to open the door to go to the wash room. Not rising from my seat, I told him impatiently how to unlock, but he was so drunk that he could not raise his shoulders. I helped him open the door.

I was disturbed again after an hour, this time by his phone. He was speaking so loud as if he was giving a public speech. I realised that he was talking to his little grand-son, who saw him off at the station 'just a few hours ago'.

He was testing my patience. It was 4 am. I lost my sleep. I started reading my notes on 'Emotional Balance' which had a soothing effect. I came down relaxed. I started conversing with him as there was still one hour time to reach our destination.

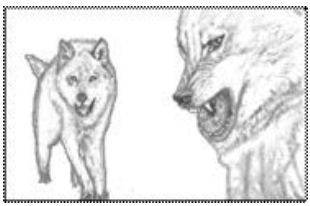
I was shocked when I came to know that his was a terminal case.

The alcoholic odour was that of his medication. He was operated for cancer (partial gastrostomy) and was advised to eat soft food like idly at regular intervals. He was also paralytic to raise his hands above shoulder level to unbolt the door previous night.

He told me that he came to the capital city to visit his son, a receptionist in a hotel. Another son is working in a construction company in Saudi. He purchased a first class return ticket for his father to travel in comfort. The old man is returning back to his village, missing his little grandson whom he may not see again in his life. His voice chocked while narrating his story.

I found the real meaning of empathy. It was coincidental that I was making notes on the same subject for my lecture next day.

I realised that the origin of my frustration is not due to my discomfort in the night, but because of my reservations to accept him as my co passenger. If he was an well-to-do aristocrat I would have gladly shared his alcohol. On this, I remembered a story.



This African tale is about an old man, who was sharing his life experiences with his grandson. "I often feel two wolves fighting inside me. One wolf is vengeful, and angry. The other wolf is compassionate and loving one."

*The curious grandson asked, "Which wolf wins the fight?" After a thoughtful silence the grandfather answered serenely, "The one I feed…"**

Assertive skills in relationship:

Assertiveness is, to get what you want by working with people, not 'against' them. It is a confident declaration or affirmation without need of any approval; without aggression over other's rights or submission of own rights. It is an important behavioural skill taught by motivators.

Ramya enters the room to watch her favourite program but finds her sister clinging to the television set. How she deals with the situation depends on four behavioural aptitudes.

PASSIVE: She returns back avoiding unpleasant confrontations but is depressed. Apathetic people fail to express their honest feelings, allowing others to challenge and thus are deprived of own rights. They conceal their weakness with a mask of *being good*. When they cannot recover a loan, they believe it is because of their kindness. They are dependent and live with low self-esteem. Other people sympathise and praise them, but take advantage of their weakness.

AGGRESSIVE**:** Ramya yells, "You watch TV endlessly. Now it is my turn. If you don't allow I will complain to Dad. You are already scoring C grade marks and know the consequences." She puts her sister down by emotional black mail. Aggressive people violate the rights of others and get their jobs done by being loud, animated and command by humiliating, belittling or overpowering. They sincerely believe that they are fighting for their genuine rights.

PASSIVE – AGGRESSIVE: Ramya goes away calm, but throws food plate complaining that the food is not good. Passive aggression is 'transfer of emotion' with confused and unclear expression.

ASSERTIVE: Assertive people are confident and reveal their feelings and beliefs directly and openly. Assertiveness involves standing up for personal rights, conveying them in an appropriate way without degrading others. Ramya says, "I know you love to watch TV for some more time, but my favourite programme is coming up in five minutes. If you agree, let us both watch it. You can watch your program after half an hour. Do you remember I did the same thing when you requested two days ago?"

Be assertive first and can show aggressiveness if the former does not work. But never be passive or passive–aggressive.

Perception and attitude go hand in hand. A conflict with your friend may damage your relationship permanently or make it stronger… depends on your attitude. But it is sure that wrong perceptions lead to misunderstanding.

"I give you two hazelnuts and again another two. How many do you have now?" a mother was educating her child. "Five" said the child. She re-framed the question making it simpler, "Suppose I give one and then one?"

The kid said "Three". The disgusted mother thought that the kid is confused with the word 'hazelnuts' and said, "You have a pen. I give you one more. How many do you have?"

*The boy said in a jiff "two". The mother smiled with a sense of achievement and asked him to replace hazelnuts with pens. "Yes. Still it's three because I have one in my pocket" said the boy.**

It depends on how you look at a person, an incident or the world. When man stepped on the Moon for the first time on 20th July 1969, a news reporter asked Theresa whether she would like to visit the moon if given a chance. "Certainly yes" she replied, "if the diseased, destitute, helpless and unwanted are there."

On noticing a boy shivering on a foot-path on a wintry night, Bill Gates may order his secretary to admit him in an orphan hostel 'financed' by him. Mother Theresa may spontaneously take him into her fold. Bin Laden might see a prospective terrorist in him, revolting against the society that caused him such a pain.

WRONG PERCEPTIONS SHOW ERRONEOUS ILLUSIONS. Coffee would taste sour after munching a sweet. Reading is boring after watching a T.V serial. Silence is more fearful than sound in a suspense film. A dark cloud is joy to a farmer before seeding but bane at the time of harvesting. Thunderstorm is a curse on the day of wedding, but boon to the couple on their honeymoon. It's all how you see.

Develop positive insights. Your perception about 'you' makes your future. You would land up as an extra artist if you are lazy to practice dance, fights and acting thinking that you have everything.

Positive perceptions of children go beyond our thinking. Here is one such example.

A teacher asked her students to write down the 'Seven Wonders of the World'. She gave clues to a girl who was unable to identify them. Hinting the Great Wall of China she said, "Think of a wall that stood against the hailstorms and hurricanes" and described Panama Canal, "It flows relentlessly against all odds and seasons".

As the girl wrote, the teacher continued to describe Eifel Tower, "A tower that leans but never falls and accepts defeat." About Taj Mahal she said, "People say it glitters in moonlight, but you can see its tinsel with your insight" and about Pyramid "It is a symbol of hard work, concentration and science that time could never destroy."

As the student completed, she went to her to verify. The shy kid hesitantly handed over the paper. The teacher did not understand her unrelated answers to what she explained. She was perplexed first, but recovered gradually; went to the dais and announced those names. After a brief silence, the classroom reverberated with claps...!

The little girl wrote: "Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa, Helen Keller and Albert Einstein".

Intensity of friendship depends on attitude, age and surprisingly on geographical conditions, civilisation and past history also. Children make quick friends and also forget fast. Eskimos make friends without reservations. Germans typically have relatively few friends, aloof to people from other countries, draw a strong distinction between their few friends and many acquaintances. For Americans, friendship is a lose term and Russians are fearful to make new acquaintances.

Wife: Mom wrote. They want 5 lakh rupees to renovate their house.
Husband: I know you are the only child and you are also earning. But what is the immediate necessity? We have much overhead expenditure this season. Try to understand our problem.
Wife: Not my mom. Your mom..!
Husband: O! She told me long ago that their house was leaking. Whom can they approach? I am the only child. We should somehow send.

THE ART OF LOVING

LOVE IS AN INFATUATION
CONTINUING TILL THE LAST DAY OF LIFE
WITH THE SAME BELONGINGNESS.

Love is an emotion of attachment with people, animals, nature and universe. In can be impersonal or inter personal. Companionship is part of love with opposite gender. It is a closer relationship with a desire to be together, always enjoying each other's company. Friendship is also a companionship but without a deep urge to be together at all times.

When it comes to choosing between love and career, it's never going to be an easy answer. Diehard romantics tell you that 'love' is the ultimate. On the other hand ladder-climbers look down and yell at you to give up your personal life to reach out to your ambition. Whether you climb up the ladder or fall in love, you'll always regret afterwards, unless you're whole heartedly convinced with your decision. Never waver in taking a decision in love matters.

The word 'Affection' is derived from two Latin words, 'ad' and 'facer' that means 'to do something to others'. Try to be happy in the company of people who love you, rather than struggling to be happy in the company of whom you love.

First impression:

To open a shop is easy… to keep it open is difficult. This analogy applies to love. Many friendships either fade out or come to an abrupt end due to this reason. First impression is not always the best. The more you read the person, the more effective and longer the bond is. 'Reading people' means understanding the personal dynamics. There are six skills to build such reading ability:

- Listening resolutely.
- Observing clearly.
- Taking a second look at the first impression.
- Not hurrying to implement what you learnt recently.
- Being discreet and judicious.
- Being detached till clear of infatuation.

Love and possessiveness:

Love is confidence. Five types of viruses spoil it: Anger, Misunderstanding, Jealousy, Possessiveness and Variations of mood.

A boy tries to reach his girlfriend on her mobile that is continuously busy. When they meet, the angry young man starts querying sarcastically. He won't be convinced with her logical explanations.

If she says she was talking with her mother, he retorts "What is there to talk for an hour? Didn't you see my missed calls?" If she says her phone was not working, he argues senselessly "You could have informed me that from a coin box." If she pleads that her phone was with her friend, he blames irrationally "Your stupid friend… Can't she purchase a phone? Why didn't you say that you won't give? Don't you think a creature is waiting here for you? Off late you are not caring me," saying this he may slap or may weep.

If you justify the boy's emotion and call it love, think about the girl. If she is also hyperactively temperamental, she may argue, "You are a fool. You can never understand me. The feeling that 'I want to talk to her' is love. 'She is happy in talking to others' is jealousy. Believing that 'She cannot be happy elsewhere' is trust. 'Her phone must have been out of order' is confidence. You can neither love nor have confidence. Bye. Bye forever."

Materialists say, "The greatest problem is our inability to make a clear-cut distinction between love and attachment. They appear the same but are not. Nothing else can be as poisonous as attachment. 'To love' means unconditional surrender. If there is even a single condition, then you are important to 'you', not the other person. Then 'you' are the center, and the other is just a means. You are using the other, finding satisfaction, and gratification through the other..! You are your goal. But love means 'dissolve and merge'. That's why people are afraid of love. You may talk and sing about it, but deep down you are afraid."

If the above definition is to be believed to be true, love is selflessness. The desire to be loved is itself selfish. But we cannot accept this statement prima-facie. Love is mutual dependency. Having someone worried about you when you don't come home at night, is a basic human need. Anyway it is controversial and let us not dwell into this further.

Expression of love:

To love is easy, but to express aptly is most difficult. Robert Browning challenged the researchers on love with the most engaging tasks in his poem, "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways…"

Can love be understood or to be expressed? Certainly it should be expressed either with words or through behavioural enactments. Discover what makes the opposite person feel most loved. Express it regularly. Expand your expressions of love into multiple approaches. Speak words of affirmation. Share quality time.

Every person not only wants to be loved, but also wishes to know that he is being loved. Love is conveyed by various ways, from gifts to writing letters with blood in initial stages of infactuation. Unfortunately, when they take the other's love for granted, the *density* of communication diminishes. It happens even with the spouse.

Expression of love can be by a smile, touch or a deed. Writing letters is the best form, as some expressions can better be put on paper than being oral. One fine morning you are shocked to receive a hand written message from your beloved "Sorry to tell you dear! Our love is not going to be a happy ending…" Traumatised you turn the page and find, "Because my love never ends"*

Would it not give you a heartfelt smile?

Teachers should encourage children the habit of writing letters to their parents and vice versa, even though they live under the same roof. When you write letters to your beloved, let them not be melodramatic. People love 'true to heart' communications.

Teenagers feel egoistic to 'express' love to elders by words or deeds. When questioned, 'how you express your love to your parents?' students reply, 'By studying hard, by fulfilling their dreams' etc. I say, 'No. It is not love. It is for your own benefit you study hard'.

We cannot fault them. The fault is with parents for not training them in their early age. When a father suggests his child, "Dear, when we go to your grandpa's house, will you comb my father's hair? Will you teach and play 'book cricket' with granny?" Don't you agree that the kids would jump at it?

Remember how your mother held you when you were a baby, how your father built sand castles on the beach, read a storybook in the night by your side. Should you not reciprocate it just because you are 'older' now? You may be a teenager or a postgraduate but still you can help your mother in the kitchen by peeling onions, cutting vegetables etc. It is not that she cannot do it on her own, but conversing while lending a hand strengthens the bond of affection.

Try to colour your father's hair. When he is down with backache, take up your mother's job. Sit on the floor by your mother's chair and decorate her hands with mehandhi. Ask your sister to click a photo. How nice would it be to look at the life-size photo in your drawing room after twenty years?

How about going to a movie with your granny… only two of you!

Did you recently massage your father's back or legs? Did you cook all alone one evening for the entire family? Did you ever scissor your grandma's nails? Did you ever sit by your sister in the early morning while she was decorating *rangoli* in front of the house?

"Tell us one of your memorable love experiences" my colleague asked in an interview. Many candidates blushed but a girl said, "My mother was sick with lumbago when I was eight years old. My school starts at seven. My ten-year-old brother, who normally sleeps till late, woke up early, heated water for my bath, struggled to plait my hair, powdered my face, cooked food, arranged the lunchbox and accompanied me to the bus-stop. My mother would leave me there and return. But he stayed till the arrival of the bus, followed it running and shouted, 'Don't leave anything from the lunch. Should tell me in the evening how I cooked'. It is the most memorable experience in my life" she concluded.

Eskimo kiss: Gestures of love include shaking hands, holding, hugging, high five (raising one hand to hit other's hand) walking arm-in-arm, kissing, placing an arm over the other or punching…. Rubbing noses is called 'Eskimo kiss' that serves the same role of shaking hands, as Eskimos have little to expose, except their nose and eyes.

Love and arranged marriages:

'Marriage is an amalgamation of two souls' they say. Such a fusion is possible only in few cases. Otherwise it is an adjustment or a clash of egos. If one of the couple is dominating and the other is docile, the bondage continues with adjustment. Otherwise it is fighting, mutual criticism and quarrel till one becomes dormant.

In arranged marriages one does not know the likes and dislikes of the partner. On the first day of their honeymoon the wife may want to explore the beauty of the hill station and the husband may like to confine to hotel room sharing the intimate moments. Enough..! The detachment may start from the first day itself.

Love marriages have different tales to tell. Both partners try to show the best part of their faces and wither their masks after the wedlock. They cannot face the bitter truths in reality. "Is it for this person I sacrificed my parents and my future?" is the seedling for such disappointments. After such repulsion, every move escalates the disgust. Even small mistakes are viewed through a magnifying glass. Physical urge may cover up the friction in the initial stages, but ultimately the mental impulse prevails. You would be surprised to know that the lovers approach counsellors after their marriage, more than the couples by arranged marriage.

True definition for 'love' between wife and husband is: **INFATUATION CONTINUED TILL THE END OF LIFE.** Transform the *initial physical desire* and *psychological infatuation* into intimacy and see that it remains with the same intensity till the end.

There is no conceptual rule that a good husband and a good wife make a good couple. Emotional outbursts and communication gaps are common between couples. Reconciling through rational discussions and a small compromise is the best way to avoid unnecessary tensions. The first lesson in any relationship is: **THE FAULT YOU FIND IN YOUR COMPANION IS YOUR WEAKNESS THAT YOU COULD NEVER ACCEPT.**

Win/lose move holds well only in sports, competitive exams and court arguments, but not in relationships. Words can build either bridges or walls. There may not be a fault on either side, but both still may have a confrontation. When the bondage is not strong, minor disagreements end up in major arguments.

Smallest misunderstanding creates a major ripple in the relationships. Be clear with everything rather than repenting for doing nothing. You are great if you can find your faults but you are greatest if you accept someone with their faults. One degrades to trounce the spouse in arguments. This is called 'lose/lose' move … I don't mind losing but I want you too to lose..!

A landlord kills his rival in a water-sharing dispute. When he is out on bail, the son of the deceased kills him and goes to jail.

There is no difference between those landlords and couples shouting at their peak, pointing out at each other's mistakes. They do not hesitate to wash their dirty linen in public. They dig out the past and finally end with the regret of having married. Back to square one, *I am not happy and I won't allow you to be happy!*

In a relationship between husband and wife, son and father, boss and subordinate, the scenario is 'I v/s you', wherein each one tries to dominate the other with power, age, money or emotion. In moves of this nature the winner should introspect 'At what cost do I win this?'

My friend invited me and a celebrity movie star for lunch. I drew in a sweet fragrance while entering the host's house. I thought it was the smell of ice-cream. As we sat for eating, I found the dishes horrible. She mixed soda powder in the curry instead of salt and forgot to add tamarind in Sambar. This could have happened due to excitement. We almost left the lunch unfinished. It was an embarrassing situation for all. The husband said to her, "Hi..! It is true that in a fit of eagerness I wanted to cook for my friends. But, having known that I am a novice, you would have advised me when I was spoiling the dishes." She did not utter a word, but with a thin water layer in her eyes, she pressed his hand thankfully. I understood that the fragrance was not from the kitchen, but from their bondage.

"What is love?" a disciple asked. "It depends" said the master, "there are as many loves as there are people, from sex to super consciousness."

"If marriage is walking together hand-in-hand,
Both cannot insist on holding other's 'right' hand.
One has to adjust with the left.

WHEN TO LOVE

When Anita (name changed) went into a sudden depression, her parents took her to a psychiatrist in Warangal. After long persuasion, the doctor could elicit an astonishing fact that devastated her parents.

Few days earlier, Anita took consent to attend her classmate's sister marriage. Her parents had least suspicion as three of her friends came to pick her up. The reality was different. The girls went along with four boys to a picnic to Pakal near Warangal. With water pond and the thick forest around, it provided privacy.

An exciting fun turned into a ghostly nightmare when a boy drowned while swimming. The traumatised girls returned in a hushed silence. Anita went into deep shock, as the boy happened to be her boyfriend. The irony was that Anita was just 14 years old.

I was associated with 35 films. No lead character in any of these films was a *student* except one starring Kamal Hassan and Sri Devi, that too for the first ten minutes of the film. I am against advocating love during college days. Some of you may disagree if I say that one has to be matured to love or fall in love. If you question, whether people mature only after education, it's a different observation. Here is an unbelievable but true story revealed in police interrogation.

They were in love in intermediate. He failed, but she got admission into IIT. Unable to withstand the separation, they wanted to committed suicide at 7.05 p.m., the time when they met for the first time. The girl died at hostel in Chennai. Boy did not even attempt.

I was invited to a women's college at Warangal to address the emotionally traumatised girl students. Two girls died within a gap of fifteen days. The first girl committed suicide in hostel when her boyfriend declined to marry her. The second girl was attacked with acid by her boyfriend when she declined to marry him. The irony was that the sufferers in both cases were girls.

I started my speech with the remark, "I came here neither to criticise love marriages nor advocate arranged ones. In fact I personally performed my son's love marriage. Allow me to tell you my concept of teenage love and decide. To start with, let me narrate an incident."

"… A mother was reciting her thrilling love experience to her daughter. 'I fell in love with your father when I was 16. He was 18. Everybody was shocked when he came directly to my house. He said boldly, 'Please accept for our marriage. If you don't I will wait until your daughter becomes a major and then will take her away with me. But I want your blessings'. My father was furious and said that we both are too small to understand the meaning of love. Then I intervened to object to his words saying that age is no bar and nobody can decide at what age one should love. The fight went on for three years and at last our parents accepted. Thus, we could ultimately show the power of love. Now you know how your grandparents love both of us. It is all happy ending. This is the proof that love always is the ultimate winner and is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies. Where there is love there is life."

The moment I completed the last sentence, the college auditorium vibrated with claps. I gestured them to calm down and continued:

"Let me finish the last few lines. Listening to her mother, the ten years old daughter looked relieved. With a gleaming face she exclaimed, 'Oh… Thanks mummy. I was hesitating to tell. My friend is more courageous than father. I will bring him tomorrow. He is just twelve. Thanks for accepting that age is no bar to love. I will wait till both of us become majors…"

There was pin-drop silence in the auditorium and the girls were in a dilemma whether to clap or to raise an objection.

Diluting their seriousness, I continued "How would you react if your younger sister studying in eighth class says that she is in love with a tenth class boy? Now you think. How many years are you older than her? What is the correct age to fall in love according to you?" I paused.

"A guy loves you not because you are something special but just because you reciprocate him. He goes to another girl if you don't respond. There are many reasons why a girl reciprocates. With lack of parental affection, frequent quarrels between parents, repeated admonishments in the house to study well and reprimands about discipline... a girl feels to quit the house at the earliest. A small word of solace by an outsider is enough to fall for him." I continued.

"The film and TV people are *sapnon ka soudagars*. They sell dreams. Hero falls in love with the enormously wealthy but bad villain's daughter who initially says 'no' but after six reels says okay. Hero marries the heroine and he also becomes rich. There are four inexcusable false myths in this. One: rich people are bad and poor always stand by morals. Two: You need not do anything else in your college except loving. Three: A girl should say 'yes' if a boy continuously chases her. Four: The heroine only would have a boyfriend and her friends are extras in the film. Hence, among all the girls, when a boy proposes you it satisfies your ego..! I am sorry, if you are hurt, but my intention is to make you understand the realities of life."

I knew many girls did not agree with my last few sentences but I continued.

"In love both of you conceal your weaknesses such as laziness, irregular sleep habits, uneven time management etc. Only body chemistry plays a vital role. It is infatuation but nobody accepts. You counter-argue, 'How do you know that mine is not love?' Yes. It is difficult to differentiate between infatuation and love."

"Infatuation closes our eyes, whereas love opens them. But that is not our subject here" I stopped a while to grab their attention. "It sounds bitter, if I say that during college days 'love' means a thrilling time-pass for some students. For most other girls it is for the 'marriage'. In either case, unless you are a master in *nirvana-yoga*, you cannot compartmentalise between 'studies' and 'love' thoughts. If I advise that you have lot of time in future for love, you may argue that love is not pre-planned and it happens automatically. I agree. But don't you agree that your education is *more pre-planned*? Many of us here are from middle class families and our main aim is to study and settle soon to help our parents. Isn't it?" Taking them into confidence, I carried on.

"Have you ever thought why a boy does not introduce his girlfriend to his elders or the girl does not take him to her parents? Reason is simple. Both of them want to wait until they get wings to fly, in case elders oppose their marriage. But did you ever think of the consequences over a period, if the boy suddenly declares his inability to marry you for reasons like: denial by his parents, having lost enthusiasm in you or for dowry et-cetera. You know that girls are more sentimental and feel deeply hurt than men. Who would be losing more at the end when your love is known to the entire world? Is it you or your friend?" Some girls nodded in acceptance.

"My next point is... your friend keeps his parents in dark about your love till he gets a job and emotionally blackmails them to permit him to marry you. Isn't it? If he could cheat his parents who nourished him for more than two decades, how could you be confident that he would not do the same with you for a better attraction later? I am not against love marriages but my intention is to enlighten you about the puppy - love repercussions".

After giving them some time for thought, I continued "Answer my last question. If you want to purchase a car when you get a job, do you pay advance now? No. Why? You know that you may get a *better* model… or... you may be rich to have a more luxurious car." As they grinned, I continued, "If you can wait for few years for purchasing a small vehicle, why are you in a hurry to select a boy without knowing his future? Who knows, you may get a better model when you go for IAS or post-graduation." There were instantaneous claps in the auditorium. The girls were beaming. The purpose was served.

Parental care: You need not be a detective, but keep a vigil on their outings. Once in two months keep their mobiles with you for a day to check unwanted messages and late night calls. There is nothing wrong in a healthy friendship with opposite sex, but it may lead to lack of concentration and more troubles further. When your child hides in a room with cell phone and reacts violently (or suddenly stops conversing) when you step in without knocking the door; cuts on calling regular friends home frequently, they are the symptoms. Children who are deprived of love at home, seek love from outside. There may be other reasons like identity crisis (a desire to get recognised by others), influence of external factors (movies, where 'to love' is a heroic act and 'to be loved' is the virtue of a heroine) etc. Talk openly with the teen about his or her love and that is the best method. Discuss the benefits of balanced relationship. Set limits on the cell phone and internet. Associate with your child's friends. If they see dangerous flags, they would certainly tell you if something is not right. Help the teen to maintain a hobby or engage in a sport to avoid isolation after coming out of infatuation.

When I call you, if your voice sounds sad in the phone,
I feel uneasy why it is so when the incoming call is from 'me';
If it sounds joyous; I doubt how it could be so
When I am not there by your side. See. Love never keeps people happy.

THE ART OF BEING SELFISH

YOU EXPECT SOMETHING AND GET NOTHING,
IT IS A LOSS.
YOU EXCPECT NOTHING AND GET SOMETHING,
IT IS A GAIN.

'A person who lives only for himself reaps nothing but unhappiness' is a true proverb, but 'Those who live for the future always appear selfish to those who live in the present' contradicts the first. Which is correct? Einstein can only give an answer 'The force of selfishness is as inevitable and as calculable as the force of gravitation.'

If you consider 'deriving pleasure' is also selfishness, there is no act without selfishness. Growing kids, earning money, even helping the poor is an act of pleasure.

Your selflessness may appear selfish to others. Rama sent his pregnant wife to forest to prove that he is unbiased. For the critics of Ramayana, it is the culmination of selfishness. A freedom fighter's act of sacrificing kith and kin for the sake of the country may appear selfless to a common man. But how many of his family members approve it? Adi Shankaracharya renounced the world at a very young age. This caused a lot of misery to his parents. Later, he was regarded as a path finder by the whole world. Was he selfish?

One of my friends in his bachelor days had to go abroad on deputation for a couple of years, leaving his 72-year old mother in an old age home. His friends chastised but his mother encouraged him. He came in between to attend her last rituals. Often the thought of his absence during her sunset years did depress him, but if he opted to stay back in India, the misery that he missed an opportunity would have depressed him more.

I am neither supporting him nor condemning his decision but he would not have achieved his present position had he not gone for the training. One has to decide the priorities and stand by it without repentance. Otherwise, it is like watching a Hindi movie and worrying in the theatre for not going for an English film.

Shakespeare wrote in one of his works 'All great people are selfish'. His critics countered, 'Are common people not selfish?' and concluded, 'All they need is an opportunity to be selfish'.

A hero trashes the villain and rescues the heroine from being raped. She falls in love and they become intimate. As they are about to get married, the hero comes to know that his sister is in love with a guy, who stipulates a condition that he in return should marry his deaf and dumb sister. The hero has no other option except to accept, when his sister tries to commit suicide. Meanwhile the heroine realises that she is pregnant but keeps it as a secret. She is sentimentally stirred by the selfless (!) sacrifice (?) of the hero. She gifts the child to the couple and walks out towards falling sun.

If you argue 'The villain is at fault attempting to rape the heroine' don't you think that the hero is *also* at fault for his selfishness to get his sister married? The heroine is also equally selfish as she deprives her child of her mother's love. But people don't accept this argument. The film based on the above story ran for 150 days in 1960's.

MATERIALISM IS DIFFERENT FROM SELFISHNESS. Materialism is an excessive desire to acquire wealth, a value system associated with social status. A materialist feels that happiness increases through *buying, spending and accumulating* material wealth. If you believe the said Ayn Rand's philosophy you find this concept exiting. The author says, 'Materialists are not selfish. Those at the top naturally want to stay there and manipulate to keep those below from getting there.'

Materialists argue that even to be philanthropic, you should have something to give. You should have spare 'time' to serve people. They also argue that success is itself materialism and only ineffective people call the successful people 'materialists'.

Everybody wants to go up..! Show success..! Be a celebrity if opportunity permits..! Who wants to sleep in the gutter? Or eat from the bin? We want the best - and 'all' of us want that - and that is like the greatest marathon. Some will achieve it by determination and diligence, but many can never make it and stay poor. Few are easily swayed by the ease of things that appear achieved, ignoring the hard work of achievers; and cheat the society because it's easy, until they are caught.

People are neither selfish nor altruist totally. Supporters of 'egotism' argue that "Friendship is a mutual act of selfishness. You help your friends because it gives you satisfaction. Why don't you serve everybody? You assume that your friends in turn help you in need. Nothing wrong. Altruism is unnecessary sacrifice, because only 'rational and selfish ethics' allow us to pursue our desires."

The feeling that 'I have a best friend (or I am a best friend)' gives us satisfaction. But check the response to your mid-night emergency call to those whom you believe are your good friends. How many would turn up in case you are to tell that you are in a police station requiring a lawyer or in a hospital in need of O-negative blood donor?

This theory appears to be true as many people cover up selfish mottos under the disguise of friendship.

My director wanted to stop story discussions to attend the birthday of a movie star. When the dialogue writer excused himself, the director was surprised, "What's wrong? He is our friend."

"Then why your friend has not offered you an opportunity when your films were continuous flops for the past five years?"

The director was taken aback, but said fiercely "We were friends for twenty years. I was greeting him 'even in his failure' days. I cannot stop it just because he did not give me an opportunity."

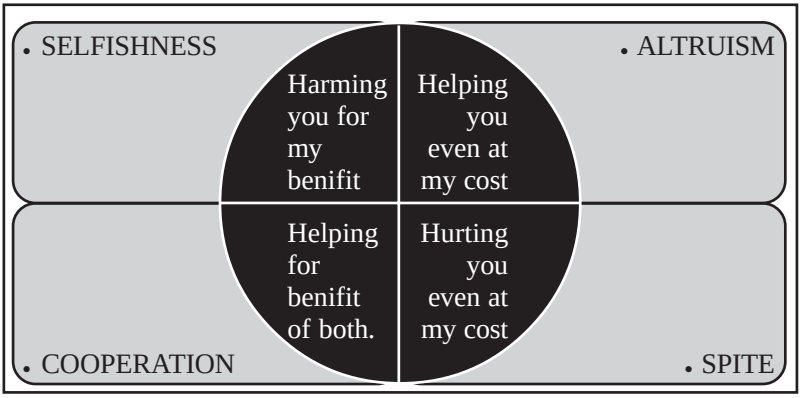
Perfect argument..! But the writer had a counter. "There is nothing wrong in wishing a celebrity. But don't substitute the word 'friendship' with 'necessity'. We go to him because we depend on his support. He is confident and feels that he 'need not come' to wish us. If you accept this I have no argument."

I still remember this argument after decades. The director went to greet the star. I don't know whether he is still going, but he was not offered any film. The writer continues to work with the hero.

It is very difficult to define what selfishness is.

She was an executive drawing a million rupees per annum. Her husband was suddenly paralyzed. She could not get long leave. She resigned. Somebody applauded her act. She smiled, 'I have never done such a selfish and satisfying act in my life'.

There are 4 possible behavioural patterns between people. Selfishness, Altruism, Spite and Cooperation: I don't mind hurting you if it benefits me - Helping you at my cost - Hurting you even if it causes me trouble - Helping you for the benefit of both of us.



Selfishness beyond reasonable limit is called self-centeredness and involves extreme self-love. It is satisfying exceptional self-interest unmindful of loss to others. Consuming last of the food in the house when knowing that others are starving is an example. Eating 'last' is altruism.Antonym for self-centeredness is planting trees on road side.

Positive selfishness: Positive selfishness is choosing to spend time and energy on things that bring you joy. By satisfying your self-interests, you will serve the interests of others better. It is otherwise called the 'wellness wheel'. Life is comparable to a bicycle wheel. Spokes radiating out from the centre to the rim are our daily activities. Physical exercises, self-control, living with cheerfulness and spiritual values are some of the spokes that strengthen our *wellness wheel*.

When you make yourself happy, people around you would also have its fragrance. With your cheerfulness you work with more belongingness. It makes you a better product, and people enjoy your 'better product'..! In the same fashion, when you are fun *creating*, people around you will have fun *consuming*..! When you make your best stuff, people get more value from you. This entire phenomenon revolves around self-care. It is certainly <u>not</u> selfishness.

There is no rule that people should always be happy with your 'best' work. But working to your optimum capacity and giving the best is your responsibility. Take the example of this book. I get excited because I wrote what I believed. *I gave it my all*. If you are not convinced with the language, style, lack of depth or its materialistic approach and argue, "I wasted my money" there is no argument.

Types of selfishness:

Mahabharata revolves around self-centred temperament whereas Bhagavad Geetha tells how to get rid of it. Preparing for the Kurukshetra war, Duryodhana says, "There is no need to worry. Great warriors like Bhishma and Karna are guarding us," indirectly indicating 'they will sacrifice lives for our victory'.

1. The nastiest: People with wicked greediness derive pleasure by causing pain to others, without any material benefit. These people are happy when others are sad by their act. Sadism is an ugly part of egotism and I consider it as the worst among all types of selfishness.

I was a witness to an act of a director, famous for his comedy films. He asked an aspiring new actor to climb a hillock three times and gallop downwards and shot the scene without film in the camera.

Merciless ragging is another example. Andy Antos, a brilliant student with kaleidoscopic talents, upcoming violinist, painter and budding poet, was just 16 when she died falling off the third floor of the hostel after being ragged in her college. It was stated in her letter that she was coerced to dance naked, smoke, forced to take drugs and take part in 'sexual perversions'.

2. Brutal: Playing on the helplessness of people is dreadful selfishness. These people do not consider others as fellow human beings.

A clerk demanding bribe from a ninety-year-old lady to release her 100 rupees monthly pension, a thief smearing the ears of lonely lady for robbing her earrings, a drunkard thrashing his wife for her daily earnings, a boy hitting his younger sister for not letting him to watch his favourite channel, a son leaving the helpless parents to stay with his rich in-laws are the examples.

3. Cashing on desires: Playing on the helplessness is brutal, but playing on the comforts of others is not as disgusting as the above two, though illegal and immoral.

When a student cannot wait till next day about his intermediate results, the clerk demands bribe to disclose his result in advance. When an ardent fan is raring to see the first show of the film, the black marketer sells for a premium. Thus these people play on the 'desires' of others.

4. Good girl syndrome: According to Fensterheim, author of, 'Don't say Yes when you want to say No' people with inferiority complex want to be good to others, but feel bad about their weakness.

Suppose you go to a movie along with your friend and it is raining when you came out. Your house is a mile away. Your friend stays in the adjacent street. If you offer your umbrella and walk home happily, you are selfless. If you curse yourself for giving the umbrella to your friend, it is good-girl or gentleman's Syndrome.

5. Constructive selfishness: When you do something good and in turn you also get benefitted, it is constructive selfishness (cooperation). In the previous example, after the movie, if you drop your friend first at her house next street and then go home, both being happy that is constructive selfishness.

Two producers approached a top hero. One is his mentor, responsible for his present status but incurred huge losses later in the industry. The other person sincerely served the hero as an honorary personal secretary for the past many years, giving more importance than his own family. The hero could not refuse either of them, nor could do both films due to prior commitments. The first producer was experienced, but not financially sound. The other person was rich and energetic but novice to the industry. Considering these two aspects, the hero suggested a solution. The film was made with first one as the presenter, and the young one as the executive producer. It was a runaway hit. It was a win-win move for three of them.

Do you know?

In India, daily 62,000 people die.

If every dying person donates his eyes, there would be no corneal blind in India within 11 days.

Paradigm shift:

Replace the word 'selfish' with 'self-care' and it appears to be more positive and acceptable when you look at it this way. When we first come into this world as infants, we have our needs met by others. Our parents and teachers are more interested in finding ways *to have us please them*, than to have us please ourselves. They say they are 'grooming' us. Under the cover of helping us to be more civilised and knowledgeable, they influence us with 'their' style of living, almost killing our childhood.

This is a controversial argument, but how much importance do they attach to our tastes, creative capabilities and potentials? Are they not selfish to tune us according to their interests unless we resist?

I am not supporting self-centeredness but my question is… do people recognise you as being noble for your *selfless* activities?

Ramesh was shocked when his lover wept saying how much she had to struggle to say 'yes' when her parents forced her to accept marrying a doctor. All Ramesh could mutter was, "Forget me as you have already accepted the alliance. Be happy."

She raged with his answer, "I never expected this from you. I thought you would catch my shoulder, grab me towards you, look deep into my eyes and yell, 'Let heavens fall. Nobody on earth can separate us'. I hate myself for loving a coward like you" and ran away crying.

Later Ramesh was in love with another woman. When she told him that her marriage was fixed with an I.A.S officer, he grabbed her towards him and yelled, "Let heavens fall, nobody in this world can separate us". Staring at him with disgust she said "When I am going to be rich and happy, are you jealous of it? I feel sorry for having loved such a selfish person" and went away furiously.

After three years, Ramesh met his first love with a baby in her hands. She apologised, "My married life is very happy. He loves me so much. Thank you for not forcing me to marry you."

His second lover met him after few months. She was in tears. "I did a blunder. When you dragged my shoulder and yelled to marry you I misunderstood. I would have accepted. My husband is a drunkard, gambler and had concealed that he was already married."

Unveiling the mask:

People judge you by *how they are benefited*. It hardly matters whether your intentions are good or not. Hence you need not do anything for others unless it gives you happiness and satisfaction. You are at liberty to do anything that pleases you except those acts that: 1. Harm you physically, psychologically and financially (Races, playing cards) 2. Harm you in future (smoking, late night movie watching, irregular food habits) 3. Trouble others (cheating, murder and theft). Selfish acts are acceptable only in *business* where the motto is to defeat the opponent's 'growth' and again in *sports* where the motto is to win.

Don't sell your individuality in return to purchase 'good opinion' from people. On the other hand, do have trust in others. You know you are good. Believe that others also are good.

When you go to your brother's house, your sister-in-law presents a saree. You assess the cost of it and make a mental note of it. When she visits you, you give a saree worth the same, or may be more. Suppose you don't have money… then? You take a hand loan and purchase it. Assume you don't get a loan. Then...? Your mood is spoiled. You feel embarrassed.

Let us see this from another angle.

When your sister-in-law comes to your house, you present her a saree. When you go to her place, she says she does not have enough money and requests you to forgive her. How do you react? Don't you genuinely and affectionately pat her to forget mutual gifts and pardons? If that is the case, why don't you think that she also feels the same? Do you think you are the 'only' person kind, humane and can understand others; and others are selfish?

Universal love:

In Buddhism, Kama is sensuous and sexual love. It is selfish and an obstacle to enlightenment. On the other hand universal love is compassion and mercy that occurs without self-interest. It reduces the suffering of others. This is unconditional, quite different from ordinary love which is usually about attachment and romance.

I don't remember from whose autobiography I read this incident, but it is from one of the former Presidents of United States of America.

It was seven in the evening but was densely dark outside, and the temperature was ten degrees centigrade. I was driving towards Paulson bay in outskirts of New York. The cool breeze was so severe that the car-heater could barely maintain the warmth inside.

Suddenly I heard a 'thud' sound. Somebody pelted a stone and broke my car's rear-glass. I stopped the vehicle with a creaking sound and got down ferociously. A boy was standing with another stone ready to hit. Surprisingly he was not trying to run away. I yelled at the top of voice, why he did it.

"Nobody is stopping the car. What should I do?" he said fearlessly. I was more irritated. "This is not the way to…" before I could complete the sentence, he caught hold of my hand and took me to the right side of the highway. Behind it, there was a narrow four-foot high pedestrian track for evening walkers..! The boy showed me an old man lying on the grass on the other side. His wheel-chair was upside down. I could make out that the paralysed old man has accidentally slipped down from the road.

Meanwhile the boy said "I tried to pull him up but he was heavy. I was trying for help since past two hours, but nobody stopped" he explained the reason for his drastic action. I had nothing to argue. I knew how 'busy' people here are. I helped him to pull the elderly man back on wheels. While pushing the chair on to the track, I congratulated the old man. "You should be proud of your grandson. For two hours he stayed in this freezing weather and courageously took a decision to stop my car."

Holding the boy's hand with gratitude, the aged man said, "I am certainly very proud of him, but he is not my grandson, just a traveller like you."

This wonderful incident reminds me a great thought: Real love is taking care of others without any personal relationship.

Keep on giving.
Don't remember your help - after extending it,
Don't think of the promise – after keeping it.

THE ART OF PARENTING

WHEN WE WERE PLAYING IN THE LAWN
MY MOTHER YELLED FROM INSIDE
'DON'T SPOIL THE GRASS'.
MY FATHER REPLIED
"WE ARE RAISING THE KIDS. NOT THE GRASS" *

"Don't eat" The God said.
"Why?" the man questioned.
"Don't ask reasons. Eat not the apple" yelled the Almighty.
The man defied his order and shared it with Eve. God wanted to teach them the experience of pain of disobedience. He gave them children...!

'Parents are the last people on earth who ought to have children' said Mrs Vladimir Cherenkov, wife of a security guard from Ukraine, who had 17 of them. You would agree with her statement, listening to what psychologists say, 'when children want something, they ask *nine times* in different tones before their parents give in'.

Does your teenage daughter stomp off to her bedroom slamming the door behind her, when she does not get it her way? If you think that it is anger you are thoroughly mistaken! It's a simple form of bullying. Have you ever experienced embarrassment, when you find your children getting cranky in a supermarket in the midst of strangers, when their request for a chocolate is negated? Do you think that it is pain and sorrow? No! It's a simple emotional blackmail.

Let us see the other side of the coin. Statistics show that parents yell at their children on an average *five* times a day. It has also been learnt that children listen approximately *seventeen* negative comments in a week from their parents against a single positive one..!

If a question haunts you, "Am I raising a monster?" the answer is certainly 'No'. The mistake lies in your vision and not with the budding flower. It is a clash between a matured (you) and a developing (your child) personality. This is what this chapter deals with.

Parental influence:

We find only in TV ads, all the members of the family smiling and hugging with tears of joy rolling on their cheeks. We need not be so melodramatic in reality, but surely we can create a rosy and brighter atmosphere in the house with little effort.

How a forest is different from a garden? Is it the soil or water or the seed? No. **THE GARDENER**...! Yes. It is he who makes all the difference.

His father died before his birth. His mother left him in an orphanage when he was 2 years old,and married another man. His step father used to bring home his girlfriends. The boy had to witness the ghastly quarrels between his step-father and mother. They divorced and his mother married for the third time. The boy developed psychological imbalances by the age 17 and at the age of 23 killed John F. Kennedy the President of America..! The boy's name was Lee Harvey Oswald.

In another case, a mother devoted all her energies in raising her only child after his father's death. She left her luxurious palace and took a house nearby his college to stay with him. He was brilliant but a personal disaster shattered his hopes. He developed polio and within few days lost the use of both legs. Doctors told him that he would never ever walk. His mother gave him much needed psychological support and remained highly protective. He grew with her care and support, and became the President of America..! His name was Franklin Roosevelt.

The above examples evidence parental influence on children. Follow three rules, just three: Know where your child is, whom he is with, and get to know what he is doing?

Two in seven teenagers suffer from discontents like 'sour relationship with one of the parents, isolation, overconfidence, depression, timidity or excess talk'. Helping them to develop a hobby is the way to vanquish these melancholies. But when the teen child expresses interest in arts like painting or music etc., the protective parents give a lecture on danger of *extracurricular* activities, instead of exposing them to those finer aspects of life. 'To give birth to a child is nothing. But to be a parent is something extraordinary; very few people are really capable of being parents' say child psychologists.

Child and the career:

In ancient days, kings used to send their children to serve the Guru in a jungle. The guru taught them appropriate skills based on their interest and calibre after assessing them for years. Now *also* parents send them to corporate colleges, but the difference is that they want their child to study to get a lucrative job irrespective of his interest or ability.

Career planning should depend on the child's interests, skills and abilities. The monitoring should be a continuous process and methods be altered as age progresses. Unfortunately no parent would be willing to look into this aspect. Many go by the 'brand value' of the course.

Another dangerous concern is that many parents stick on to a single goal. Suppose a couple publicise before friends and relatives that their child is going to be a neurosurgeon. The repeated announcement may ruin the child if he cannot get a seat in medicine. Multiple options should be kept open when the child reaches the cross roads to avoid panic on the dooms day.

A lawyer wanted his daughter to join NALSAR. She was brilliant, but unfortunately got 3 marks less than the cut-off point. They did not even dream this contingency. The last date for admissions in prestegeous Law colleges in Poona and other places were fast approaching leaving no time for discussion or taking a decision.

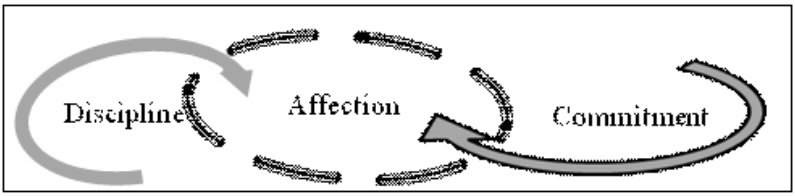
Unfortunately the parent and the child communicate only when a crisis erupts or when a crucial decision is to be taken. Children are influenced by their peers and the parents are influenced by 'their' peers. While arguing, the child forgets that his parents are more experienced than him. The parents forget that children require more **DIRECTION** than **INSTRUCTION**.

"I want to study astronautic engineering and become an astronaut" your child declares. You make light of his ignorance and say, "Astronautics have nothing to do with engineering. Anybody can become an astronaut. Anyway India is not going to send people to space in near future involving billions of rupees. As a matter of fact no country is interested in spending on this job…" you want to feed him all your knowledge. Cutting short your long lecture he declares, "I don't know all that. Me and my friend decided on it."

Being a friend to a child:

Kiss your children goodnight, even if they are already in sleep*. Infants develop confidence from positive gestures like cuddling and holding..! Joking, frequent touching, telling stories and talking intimately help them fight against inferiority complex and introversion.

A thin line differentiates 'good' parenting from 'great' parenting. Good parents may raise a child as calm, quiet and knowledgeable, but great parents shape up their child as intelligent, dynamic and skilled.



Discipline may be the *bridge* between goals and accomplishments. But surely affection is the *cement*.

'Discipline – affection – commitment' is a triangular bond. Parents, particularly the father should be a guide initially and a friend later. Building up the bond with *calculated boundaries* is a difficult task but achievable. It is the affection with which the child has to be woken up from bed, commitment that moves him into action and discipline enables to follow through.

If you find that your child's friends are doing more harm than good, never directly tell them to avoid. If you criticise his friends, he would support them. Instead, try to induce him into a different activity where he has to compulsorily be associated with people of your liking.

Tell them bedtime stories resting by their side. It not only strengthens the bond but also develops their enthusiasm. Even the 'teenagers' love to listen about Alibaba and forty thieves, David and Goliath, Gulliver travels, Sindbad and seven seas.

Some psychologists suggest dance if the child is interested, as dancing rejuvenates the soul through kinetic energy. In Greek *kinesis* means 'motion' that enhances body-brain memory connection.

Persuade your teenage children to go through the headlines of the newspaper and encourage them to express their views at the breakfast table to improve mental stimulation.

Tell them about our epics. Clarify their doubts. I had a doubt when I was twelve, why a noble person like Laxmana, severed the ears and nose of a 'lady' Surpanaka. My father could not tell, but did not leave it there. With persistent enquiries he could get the answer after about ten years from a legend and Jnanapitht Awardee Viswanadha Satyanarayana, who just completed writing Ramayana Kalpavruksham.

When Laxmana rejected to marry Surpanaka, she misunderstood the cause of rejection and assured him "Don't worry about my massive food requirements. My ears and nose are so powerful that I can listen even to the tiny sound of a rabbit in the vicinity of hundred yojanas and with a deep breath I can grab even an elephant towards me" Then Laxmana said, "One of the reasons why we are in this forest for past thirteen years is to save the sacred saints and innocent animals from beasts and demons like you" and slashed her powerful ears and nose.

Believe in the intelligence of your child:

Children at tender age have great grasping power, interest and enthusiasm to learn. Whether they become 'watchers' or 'performers' depends on you. If you sit with them and encourage learning a song, they would become performers. If you ask them 'to sit with you' to watch an item song in TV, they become watchers. Teaching rhymes and poems improves their vocabulary and pronunciation skills. Reciting them before relatives and friends shrinks their stage fear. Simple questions at dinnertime like 'what is the value of (M - A) (M - B) (M - C)….. (M - Z)' create basic interest in mathematics.

Children are intelligent and mischievous with varied proportions; some are perverted, but many are brainy and amazingly bright.

*A father cut the India map state-wise, shuffled the pieces and asked his daughter to paste again to prove her topographical knowledge. The girl did the job in just 2 minutes. Amazed he asked how she could do it so fast. "My favourite hero's photo was on the other side" she replied. **

When your child is not good at rankings, not confident at social gatherings, or not winning at sports don't get depressed. Many great people were misfits in their adolescence.

Thomas Edison (a dumb student, encouraged by his mother who believed in his intelligence), Lance Armstrong (taught by his father and got flying licence at the age of 15, before he yet had a license to drive a car), Abraham Lincoln (very little formal education), Elvis Presley (recommended to become a truck driver by his teacher, but was encouraged by his uncle and became a sensational singer and artist), Stephan king (a teacher, failed miserably with his initial writings and about to burn his scripts which were rescued by his people and later he became one of the most acclaimed horror story writer) and Albert Einstein (had speech difficulties and allergic to school but nurtured by parents) were not great kids in their childhood.

It does not mean that you should feel proud if your child is allergic to school. Be aware when, where and how to push the right buttons in right direction to get excellent results from them. A good per-cent of the teens excels in sports, painting, dancing and athletics. There are also writers, artists, musicians, singers and players. The media unfortunately glorifies the crimes by teenagers such as thefts, fights at pubs, drugs, rash driving and physical assaults rather than writing about their achievements. Focusing on crime is indirectly encouraging the youth towards negative approach. The media has to maintain a balance between caution and inspiration.

Lal Bahadur Sastry, our former Prime Minister lost his father when he was one year old. The gardener caught and trashed him when he was stealing mangoes from an orchard. When the kid wept saying he was a fatherless child, the gardener said, "Then you should be more respectable." These words left a mark on the boy and he became the most ethical political leader the country has ever seen.

Do you know?

Many parents want their children to be doctors, engineers and chartered accountants. Not even 2% parents want their child to be a teacher, soldier, leader or a politician.

Indiscipline in children:

Indiscipline includes waking up late, laziness, not obeying, lying, stealing, truancy, flinging the food platter, watching TV in study hours, arguing, whining, protesting etc.

Children play intelligently on the weakness of their parents. As the animals have basic instincts, children also know the feeble points of their parents. You be disciplined first. You cannot ask your child to be away from TV when you are a habitual watcher. Interacting with the child instead of thrashing gives a better result. Parents should understand that pampering is different from being affectionate. Being strict is different from discipline. While dealing with mischievous child, keep four aspects in mind:

a) What is to be observed about the kid?
b) What are the questions to be asked?
c) How these questions are to be framed?
d) How the results are to be interpreted?

Behavioural psychologists divide parenting into various types:

- Helicopter Parenting: Interrupting the child's ability to function on his own, constantly involving, focusing on strict discipline, demanding, scolding, high expectations etc.
- Narcissistic Parenting: Many politicians, drunkards and gamblers mind their own needs, consider children just as extension of their hierarchy. Narcissistic parenting is neglecting the child's requirements and compensating the negligence by giving the child money and freedom.
- Positive Parenting: Guiding and supporting them, helping for healthy development, respecting individuality, making space to develop individuality through their own personality and potentials.
- Toxic Parenting: Complete disruption of the child's ability through pampering leading to destruction of self-esteem etc.

We spend the first twelve months
getting the child to practice how to walk and talk
and the next twenty four years
How not to talk and sit calm *

Three types of fathers:

Fathers are of three types: Authoritative, Permissive and Equalitarian. They react differently to a similar situation.

A student requests his parents to accompany him to a temple near the adjacent village. He says that students from surrounding places are tonsuring their heads, taking a holy dip in the lake and praying at the temple. By doing this, they believed that they are destined to get first-rank in forthcoming exams which are due in a week.

Authoritarian: "No… Exams first..! No further discussion. (To the mother) Shut up. You don't involve in between. Who knows better? You or me..?" If the child is passive and fails, he goes into depression. If rebellious, he says it's not his fault but God's curse for not going to temple and his father is responsible for his failure..!

Permissive: "We all go to the temple tomorrow morning and pray for your success my son..! And I assure you, to raise your confidence… we all tonsure our heads including your mother. If you feel better with your friends, you can go with them. You can take our car. If you want to drive it, take the costlier one. You will be more comfortable." The child does not concentrate on his studies and fails, considering that the holy dip would help him passing the exam.

Equalitarian: "Certainly we can go but not before the exams. And another point is... there would be only few rankers in any exam. If tonsuring the head and a simple dip could help you to get a rank, thousands of students by this time would have come out in flying colours. Isn't it? Think. It is not the question of theism or atheism. I don't disturb your faith, but believe in yourself first. Study well. I will certainly accompany you to the holy temple after the exam."

Some parents are too restless about their children. I witnessed a mother nervously weeping underneath a tree outside a prestigious school, where her son was writing an entrance test for first standard.

I knew a 14 year old girl whose voice resembled M.S. Subbalakshmi. She was excellent in Carnatic music. Her father discouraged her from learning further as he felt it would hamper her studies. Another parent didn't allow his daughter to study IIT as it is 'far away' from their village.

Encouraging the child:

A father tempted his son "Solve this problem in 30 minutes and I will present you the bicycle you were asking for long, but if you cannot, you have to work in the kitchen during the weekend to relieve your mother from the job."

The 10-year-old boy accepted the challenge.

The father, a teacher in physics, asked, "Desert express from Kabul in Afghanistan starts at 8 a.m. and proceeds towards Islamabad in Pakistan at 80 miles per hour; and Toofan mail starts from Islamabad at 9 a.m. and goes to Kabul at 60 miles per hour. When they meet at Peshawar, which engine will be nearer to Kabul, if the distance between two stations is 480 miles?"

The boy worked out various combinations on 'time and distance' and found out with simple common sense that both trains standing at 'Peshawar station' would be at the same distance from Kabul.

His father agreed to give the cycle but told him, "Science and mathematics are based on logic. But common sense is more important than both. If you remember my question correctly, I asked about the 'engine' and not the train" and concluded, "If you apply some common sense, there are no railway tracks in Afghanistan."

The boy accepted his mistake and worked in the kitchen for two days. The boy was John L. Hall, winner of Nobel Prize in physics.

There are four important underlying concepts in the above anecdote: 1. Motivating a child to expand his wisdom, 2. Encouraging him in sharing the responsibility in household chores 3. Recognising his intelligence and knowledge and 4. Rewarding for his work.

John Hall later wrote thanking his father in his autobiography: "The best way to shun away children from watching football on television is to shift their priorities. When you reward them for solving a puzzle, creating their own joke or a story, they soon realise that 'success' is the best entertainment in this world. It should start from the early stages, otherwise they are more prone to intoxicating habits and it would be difficult to change their interests at a later stage."

PARENTING A TEENAGER

A mother complains: 'No sooner does my teenaged daughter step into the house from her school, than the phone rings. Before I could respond, she would be deeply immersed in conversion with her friend, who was sitting 'next' to her in the school bus till then.

I would be worried what emergency could have erupted in the fraction of time between her leaving the bus and reaching the house, but my daughter's side of conversation sounds, "Yah... Cool... You know of course… Is it? Really? Ha amazing. O fine..."

I get irritated and warn her that I am expecting an important call. She reluctantly shortens her chat to just 15 minutes. As she surrenders, the telephone rings again, one more call for her. Furiously I caution her not to entertain any phone and go into the kitchen to prepare snack for her. On return I find her dialling..! Aghast with B.P. rising, I shout at her "I told you no phones till tomorrow!"

"I'm calling all my friends to tell them I can't talk on the phone till tomorrow…" she shrieks back at me...!

You are hurt many times by the adamant replies of your teens. The main cause of your anger is that they neither understand your *well intentional* advices nor value your experience, knowledge and wisdom.

However if you look at it from other perspective, it is your impracticable advice that frustrates them. Teens say they are alright but are mentally uneasy many times. The cause of for their arrogant reply might have actually been due to a problem at the school. They are highly sensitive. A small comment is enough to spoil their mood.

It is hard for parents when their children maintain a stony silence in the house and pour out their heart to a stranger. But don't insist that they should confide in you only. If they prefer to talk to their uncle, aunt or teacher let them. Don't feel jealous or deprived.

Another complaint from the parents is that children prefer to spend more time with their friends and are not willing to accompany the parents to functions and parties. Accept. They are bored in your company. Present day teenage conversation is different from your generation.

Most teenagers close their doors to isolate themselves. If you enter into the *disastrous area* called their 'personal room' to turn down the volume of the music, switch off the television, or to stop the late night phone conversations, you are facing a bursting volcano. Don't try to tear through the shroud of silence. Instead, learn to listen their version without judging. This is the only key to unlock a teen's heart.

'Children and grandpas are friends as both have a common enemy' is an old joke. It may turn into reality if parents, particularly the fathers do not spend at least *seven hours per week* with their teens.

Teenagers are normally susceptible to two 'ok' stages: *'you are not ok'* and *'I am not ok'*.

The first type is reckless, arrogant, unwilling to talk to parents, and prefer to spend time with friends.

In second type of children you find sudden variations in mood, symptoms of sinking feeling, depression or craving to be a loner. Few children come out of these stages early to reach the final 'I am ok and you are ok' stage. But with regard to ninety per cent of teenagers, you have to deal with the problem and there is no other way.

At the age of ten every kid believes that his parents are intelligent, kind hearted, genius and know everything. It takes thirty years again to believe the same.

Teenage is the changeover from child to adult. If you comment something bad about her friend, your daughter would unhesitatingly support her and you get hurt. Nevertheless, have you ever realised that she also defends you in case somebody criticises you? Before giving an advice, think how your friend takes your 'uninvited' advice.

Do you know?

By the age of sixteen an average teen might have witnessed around 10,000 incidents of horror, terror, violence and crime in movies and television. By watching number of television serials, they believe that older are not wiser and they are there either to weep or scold.

Arguing teens:

It takes two to argue and as an elder you can always stop it at any time. Don't try to win them by argument. The more you win, the more they become insecure and you lose them. Hence quite often you listen to only two answers from them "*It's okay*" or "*Leave me alone*".

Enlighten them with logic, not with argument or authority. Discontinue the argument when 'you' are losing your temperament and when situation is going out of control.

Teens are fond of influencing their friends and others with their charm. They spend hours before the mirror and sincerely believe that they are 'on' the stage and the entire world is enthusiastically looking at them. They get hurt when elders ridicule. Criticising or teasing the adolescent children when they spend time in front of the mirror hurts them so deeply that they go into their shell. Instead explain, 'Thinking always about the self leads to negative self-actualisation. Nobody has time to think about you unless you are very special to them.'

The motives of teens are nobler. They become deceptive only when they doubt whether elders can understand their intentions. Hence they avoid either requesting or obeying.

There are two lasting things parents can gift to their children, 'Roots' at the elementary stage and the 'Wings' at adolescent age. Humans are the only living beings where their children return back home in the evening. * When children come back (say… from the school or college) either they 'add' knowledge and 'lose' indiscipline; or 'add' addictions and 'lose' values. Check up what's happening.

The art of arguing: Parents can never understand how the teens have an irrevocable tendency to convert normal and simple conversations into exploding arguments. But you know that any argument requires two people. And as a more matured person, you can withdraw from it. Thus you can teach your teen how to disagree with you 'respectfully'.

Parents are weak over raising their children due to five reasons: Belief, Anxiety, Greed, Pampering and Self-sympathy.

1. BELIEF

Parents sincerely believe that their child is not like 'others'. It would be a shocking revelation when the beliefs of some unfortunate parents shatter.

There are thousands of graduate girls staying in hostels, attending interviews and desperate to get a job. Lot of leisure time, frustration, sense of failure and homesickness make them feel lonely. A word of solace is enough for many of them to opt for a temporary companion.

When I was discussing this topic at a parents' meet, a person commented, 'what's wrong in it? That is the age to enjoy'. May be true… till it does not end up in tragic repercussions..!

> *Few years ago, a van fell into a canal at midnight and got washed away. Nine students trapped in it died on the spot. It included four girls, who told their parents that they were going on an excursion conducted by their college (The institution later denied it). Some empty whisky bottles were found in the van along with dead bodies. The average age of the girls was fifteen.*

It is easy to construct a house, but difficult to build a home. If the atmosphere at the house is healthy, wherein the mother is caring, father is friendly and brothers are affectionate, girls don't hasten for outside undesirable love. Of course suffering from identity crisis and peer influence are different.

A Scandinavian proverb says, 'The first half of our lives is ruined by our parents and the second half by our children." Parents can certainly change the second part with four responsibilities: **D**efuse the tensions, **E**nhance the confidence, **A**void confrontations and **R**esolve the issues. It is the 'dear' principle.

The most important man for a girl in her teens is her father. When she is courted by her father and guided by mother, she gets confidence to accept her *psychological* and *physiological* changes respectively. Otherwise it leads to self-doubt, retreating from social contracts and even eating disorders.

2. ANXIETY

This category comprises of parents who always doubt the child's character, ability, courage, talent and skills.

A decade ago an agency selected toppers from few designated colleges to send to Nepal bearing the total expenditure on education tour. It was a rare opportunity based purely on merit. A girl was not allowed by her parents just because she had to go with boys.

Parents restrict their children's enthusiasm for driving. But for a teen, driving means independence..! If you deny, they take a back door method. Instead, accompany them for a drive, educate them about the consequences of rash driving, give confidence, and above all participate in their thrill. Make them know the difference between *adventure* and *pleasure of driving*.

A girl was brought for counselling as she was not interested in marriage. We thought it was a case of psychological trauma or love-failure, but had to change opinion on seeing her academic record. She was a topper from tenth class and a gold medallist in nuclear engineering. She wanted to do research on fusion of atomic nuclei, radioactive waste and proliferation. Her aim was Nobel Prize. We didn't laugh but said, "Even Nobel Prize winners are married." Her parents appreciated our argument but she said, "If a boy wants to go to U.S for research, will you suggest the same? I can't do justice to married life. I am not family type. Try to understand." Truly convinced with her argument, we counselled her parents to allow her to go. Testing my memory, she was with Centre for Engineering Applications of Radioisotopes, North Carolina State University a decade ago.

Whether it's the toy or the video game, no matter what your children want, they get it. Many parents believe that denying a child their requests will make them seem like the enemy. However, kids need realistic expectations about how to earn things, the value of money and above all, your financial limitations.

3. GREED

Children have become status enhancers like wealth, ornaments and building interiors. Parents prepare their child ready to be for the rat race among other children. '**OUR CHILD-NEIGHBOUR'S ENVY'** is the motto. Psychologists say that parents, who could not attain top rankings in their academic career, wish to see their child on the top of the world.

'Thoroughbred' is the word used for the racehorse rigorously trained for its purpose. The training starts from the foetus stage.

A sanctimonious mother said, "Inspired by the stories of Prahlada and Abhimanyu, I placed a tape recorder near my womb and taught various subjects like literature, history and science to my six month old foetus inside. I strongly believe that the baby will be ahead of other students from her kindergarten stage". Her husband continued, "We trained our 5-year-old son also the same way. We have enrolled him in a brain activity school that promises 'Baby Einstein DVD concept', 'Twin Brain Development (?)', 'Baby Yoga' and concentration game techniques. The result is excellent."

Nothing wrong in contemplating child's bright future, but at what cost should it be? Do you know that there is a school that trains sixth class students for admission into another school that coaches them for 'entrance test' into prestigious IIT Coaching Centre, which in turn gives training for IIT entrance? I happened to talk to a boy from such a school.

"If one mother has 13 children, how many children 165 mothers have?" I asked. "2145" was the immediate reply. He was genuinely good in multiplications and was able to multiply a four digit number with another three digit figure within a minute in my presence. The proud parents claim that he is brilliant in maths without understanding what the boy lacks, the common sense.

The *Rat race* starts so early that they lose their childhood. It results in a burnout by the age of fifteen. This is the reason why many child prodigies are failures at the later stage of life.

Parents expect their children to slip into neat little boxes labelled 'popular', 'intelligent', 'athletic', and a non-performer is mocked. But don't you think expecting too much from an average child is callous?

Enhancing talent is different from coercively injecting it. For a question, "What is Sin è ÷ Cos è?" an intermediate student hesitatingly replied "One". He was forced to prepare for IIT. His parents mortgaged their house for his coaching fees. He was constantly ridiculed in the class as synonym for 'stupidity' that depressed him, and he later became insane. The over-ambitious parents blame educators, educators in turn parents and both blame video games, internet, cell phones and the cricket without realising where the real fault lies.

Some parents argue: "Why some cynics say that present generation is losing childhood? Earlier the children played kabbadi, Khoko, badminton and went for swimming in lakes, jump from the tress etc. But now our kids also play computer games, solve more intelligent puzzles and participate in quiz programs. We have to change according to times."

True. But if you have children between 12 to 20 years age, ask them to lift a pen from the ground bending (without sitting), or do 100 skips or run 500 meters nonstop. They say they can, but many cannot. That is losing the childhood.

I know a parent who takes his son to tennis coaching before sun-raise; and after the strenuous session, the boy travels for *an hour* by bus to go to one of the prestigious schools. Later in the evening he attends a music class and as he returns, the tuition teacher will be waiting. His parents believe that they are role model parents, providing 'everything' to him. May be 'yes'. The parents import Swiss oil to massage his legs, give Boost thrice a day to better his height, does not allow him to watch TV for fear of losing concentration, and send him to summer camps to improve his vocabulary standards. The boy later became a total introvert.

4. PAMPERING

Teach your child words like, adjustment, compromise and giving in. There are four reasons for hyper-parenting:

1. Own academic failure of parents.
2. Being in 'guilt' for not spending more time with the child.
3. The kick in exhibiting their child's achievement to others.
4. 'As a kid I suffered - let them enjoy' syndrome.

Parents feel guilty leaving children home for long hours. They become too lenient to cover up the guilt, leaving them more liberal, and provide them with material possessions like internet, cell phone, huge pocket money and even costly cars. They accept their requests without verifying simple truth of their versions.

When I was with my psychologist friend, a doctor couple came for suggestion with a peculiar problem. They said three girls were in love with their son. 'One girl sends a message every five minutes, second one chats for hours and the third writes letters with blood'.

We were genuinely confused, 'What is so heroic about him for three girls to love?' my counsellor friend asked. The couple might have had similar doubt and spent sleepless nights discussing the reasons. They came out with immediate answer, "He has the costliest cell phone and drives his own scooter" the father said.

We were more surprised this time. "Having a cell and a vehicle are common now-a-days. What is the speciality?" my friend asked.

"He is studying seventh class" the mother revealed. With greater shock and confusion we wanted to know why a seventh standard student should drive a vehicle to school. "He is allergic to bus" they said in unison. "And the cell phone is to find out whether he safely reached destination. After-all he is a twelve year old boy."

No comment. A pampered child who's whims and fancies are catered to, who is used to having his own way, who is made to feel special by his parents, may become an egoistic or an attention seeking adult. When such a child grows up into the role of a parent he surely is going to pamper his children the same way as he was fecilitated.

5. SELF-SYMPATHY

"I don't believe in punishing my child" says another mother. "I have different methods to make him study. When he got 89 marks and the class first was 91, I cut my finger. He wept seeing my pain and blood and started studying well."

On the other hand threatening the child with dire consequences is common with many parents. I know a mother who threatens her child that she would commit suicide if he does not get a mark.

A mother brought her mentally disturbed son who failed intermediate. He made few shocking revelations under hypnosis.

His mother was from a well-knit and well-to-do family. She was a graduate but loved and married a poor illiterate against the wishes of her elders and later not happy with her marital life. He was a drunkard. To compensate her failure and dissatisfaction, she told her son, "My brother is an IIT graduate, his daughter is from BITS, and my sister's son has successfully completed Group One. All our maternal side relatives are well-educated. I am pinning my hopes on you. Get a rank in inter. You know about me. I stand by word. If you fail to get a seat in IIT, that is the end of your career. You will be joining your father as a lineman."

The boy could not cope up with the pressure. The expectations were too high for him. He was depressed with the 'fear of consequence' resulting in miserable paranoid state of anorexia nervosa.

Narrate this story to children, who quarrel for TV remote control.

A thirteen-year-old boy called on the neighbour for a ride on his new cycle. Thrilled with its elegance, the kid asked him from where he got the cycle. The boy pompously said that his elder brother sent it from America on his birthday. The kid murmured, "How nice it would have been, if I had..."

"Are you saying… how nice it would be to have a brother in America?" jeered the elder boy.

"No" said the kid passively. "How nice it would be if I grow faster, go to America and send a cycle for my younger brother".

TEN COMMANDMENTS

Summarising this chapter, here are ten simple principles on parenting:

1. Be with them physically, mentally, morally, actively and emotionally:

Youngsters are more prone to physical and verbal outbursts due to the active adrenaline release. Outwardly they may appear different, but basically they are *apprehensive*. They prefer and require parent's presence, more than their 'presents'.

A mother complains, 'My Teenage daughter grumbles if I am not present at home when she returns from her school, but ignores me if I am at home.' It's quite natural. Teenagers feel more unsecured inwardly but they don't expose it. They take your presence for granted. It is like a Maharaja in his tent playing chess peacefully in the midnight, heavily depending on his body guards outside, but not bothering to reciprocate their presence.

2. Cultivate good habits:

Children acquire imaginative skills from their 4th year. Start changing their adverse lifestyles in the initial stage itself. For example, your excess television watching habit may mould your child from an *active force* to an *immobile* object.

Children pick up from their parents. Change your irregular eating habits, unruly time-management, emotional imbalance and late night arrivals. If you are watching the idiot box for long hours in the nights, how can you expect your child to read in the next room?

Telly is continuously 'on' in some houses like refrigerator. Limit their television-viewing time to *ten hours* per week. Spend more time with them to minimise their association with Cell and video games. Whenever possible, join them to watch programs, rather than allowing them to browse the channels on their own. Choose at least one day per week for any other entertainment than TV. Name it *'Television-free day'*.

3. Teach creativity:

Engage them with painting sets, clay modelling, sporting, crafting and construction toys. Ask your teenage child to write a leave letter for you. If you are an executive, let him draft a letter of appreciation addressing your subordinate. It would be a wonderful experience for him/her.

Take kids to places like libraries, cultural shows and plays, museums and interesting sights to enhance their 'productive interest' towards life. It is unfortunate that many teens might not have seen a famous painting, a stage play, a classical concert, or read a literary masterpiece 'at least once' in their life time.

Leave apart expecting big things from the child; verify whether you are doing simple things as a parent. Have you ever taken them to a meeting where they have an opportunity to talk on the stage before unknown gathering? Many teenagers are good at conversing for hours with same age group and can very well lecture in the 'in-house school meetings' before their classmates. But are you sure that they don't have stage fear? Can they address unknown audience?

Children respond well to high parental involvement like checking their homework and doing projects together. Your teenage son feels immensely happy if you attend his tennis-ball-gully-cricket match in a slum playground. Plan to go to the movie together with your spouse and postgraduate children. These activities strengthen family bonds and enhance their confidence.

4. don't expect your child do wonders:

If you think you can mould your children exactly the way *you* desire, and if you are confident that their behaviour and manners will be according to *your* taste, and if you are sure that they would get exactly the ranks *you* anticipated, you deserve the prestigious Padmabhushan award. Fewer expectations give you less pain.

When your teen says, 'everybody in the class has a cell (or) a vehicle' and when you are unable to provide, say "You are different dear". The concept of 'I-am-different' has a positive bearing not only for your child, but for you as well. Let your child know the ground realities.

5. Be a companion:

Help them read fiction and non-fiction books. Play indoor games like chess, caroms etc. Be a companion.

During the 'seven years period' of their teenage (13 to 19) children take thousands of decisions and confuse to comprehend which is correct. They indirectly seek someone's guidance. Try to be that 'someone'. But be cautious, they seek your *suggestion* but not a *verdict*. When an important decision is to be bestowed upon them, discuss it at right time, in a right voice and in a right mood. If you give them advice when they are angry, nobody can save you becoming their target. Listen to their views though they appear immature; Understand their version, narrow the area of dispute, find the best, be convinced truthfully or convince them tenderly.

In order to make children do better, we need not make them feel worse. Instead of harsh remarks like 'Don't gossip', elaborate: "Often I find you talking excessively on phone, instead of teaching your younger sister as you used to be earlier".

Teens have a running internal conversation either positive or negative, assessing and judging them-selves. They are the most confused, but still want to be themselves. They come to elders only when they need to be rescued, and *never ever* for a suggestion.

6. Make them feel they are good decision makers:

Teenagers act like babies if they are not treated like adults. They feel great if parents ask for their advice and feel like walking on cloud nine. They start using their brain. Their suggestions could be shrewd also. Anyway final decision is always yours.

If you are contemplating to purchase a vehicle or a plot to construct your house, take your child along to various sites; ask him to select. You may have already made up your mind but listen to his opinion and then convince them the merits. Let him own your decision. He feels proud throughout his life, that it is 'he' who has suggested and selected such an excellent site for you.

Get into the habit of catching kids being good. Praise them for their achievements, but not for getting your things done.

7. Stop frequent reminding of misdeeds:

Newton said, 'Until I was thirteen, I thought my name was Shut Up'. Children drift away from parental control when they are continuously discouraged. Constant nagging, criticism and repeated negative annotations make them deaf.

Reminding their misdeeds like 'you did it… and faced trouble… you didn't do it…' is the poorest communication. When you are worried about their behaviour, tell in a different way. My friend said:

"When I had a doubt my fourteen year old daughter stepping into a stage of crush with a boy, I did not talk to her directly. Instead, I appeared worried and when my daughter asked the reason, I told her that my colleague's teenage daughter wanted to marry a boy, causing worry to all of us. Instead of pointing the finger directly at her, I pulled her into discussion. I elicited her thoughts and told her the realities of life. That worked."

Now his daughter is a C.A., working for a salary of twenty lakhs per annum, happily married and a mother of two.

8. Teach them time management instead of managing their time:

Your children don't worry if someone is doing everything including caring, guarding and serving (even worrying) for them.

Assign them tasks like organising family functions and group picnics to develop leadership qualities. Such activities channel their overflowing energies in right direction. Assign some household chores when maid is absent. Assist them to cook. Train how to plan home budget for a month. Let them know your financial worth, assets and liabilities. Discuss long-term investments. Talk interpersonal problems if the teen is matured.

These simple acts give them enormous pleasure that they are 'also' running the house. Parents should also encourage their children after their twelfth standard to work for an hour a day (or even few hours on weekends) and earn pocket money.

My father suggested me to tuition 4th class students when I was in my eighth class. They used to pay me ten rupees per month per student. Thus I could earn my pocket money, as well as could revive the fundamentals of my subjects.

9. Engage them intelligently:

Here are some interesting exercises to engage children. Ask them to write three priorities *humorously* that they like and don't like in each member of the family. It can go like this:

My father is affectionate, friendly and takes us out on weekends. But he reads new paper every day for two hours before going to office. He stays most of the time in the bedroom watching TV in the night. He never helps mom in the kitchen. He smokes cigarettes. Thus his three priorities are Newspaper, bedroom and cigarettes.

My mother is always fresh, active and smiling. She never abstains from work. She pretends anger but never is angry. The qualities I don't like are: she wakes me up early even on holidays, cooks food that I don't like, and does not allow me to watch TV in the night.

Tell them interesting facts like 'Microwave was invented after a researcher walked by a radar tube and a chocolate bar melted in his pocket'. Quiz them with questions like: 'What would you do that day if you know that the world is going to end in next 24 hours? If you were given a chance being a bird or an animal for a day, which living being you would choose and *why*? What would you do if you see a fire station burning?' and gift them for intelligent answers.

10. Understand difference between discipline and being strict:

Both the parents should be consistent in disciplining their children. Don't go to your child's rescue while your spouse is scolding them. On the other hand, don't punish for improper behaviour that is part of normal development such as thumb sucking, speech development, and more importantly for anything that is accidental, particularly when the child is not old enough to understand the reason for it.

To tell whether you are too lenient or too strict in bringing up your kid… is a herculean task. Affection is different from pampering. ***Mothering is different from smothering****. Children require freedom to grow and to learn, but they can't thrive on limitless freedom. Undisciplined children are destructive, aggressive and accident-prone. Assess regularly whether the growth in the child is on the negative or positive side.*

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

1. If you are providing them money to eat outside, they eat less at home, as the oily and spicy food is tastier than the healthy one.
2. Discourage them watching TV while eating. It harms digestive system. Tell them to respect 'food'. They are fortunate to have food twice, in a country where 40% of children do not have one time meal.
3. Never hit a teenager. He forgets the reason but remembers your slap. Explain them the mistake. Once pushed to a corner, the teen starts hiding the information that you cannot digest.
4. Teach the child to handle small electrical repairs using wrench and screw driver, polish shoes, wash dishes, iron clothes, make bed etc. It develops self-dependency.
5. Touring strengthens ties. Unfortunately for many people, touring in holidays involves Tirupati and Shirdi only.
6. Send your child alone (with other caretakers). It satisfies the kid's quest for independence. He develops the confidence, self-reliance, communication and habit of spending money within the budget.
7. Avoid using the phrase, "At your age I..."
8. Don't say, "Be good, go and bring the vegetables". The kid thinks that serving others is the symbol of goodness. He becomes an approval seeker chasing the Good Samaritan title.
9. Explain the children, why unacceptable behaviour must be punished. It should be in their way of reasoning. In a form of punishment never deprive them of essentials such as food and water or make them stand outside under the sun etc.
10. Formulate 'simple rules' like keeping the bed sheet properly on wake up, tooth brush in its place, wishing 'good night' to grandpa before going to bed etc.
11. Encourage them to read at least for half an hour in the holidays also. Make it a hobby.

12. Along with your exaggerated success stories, tell your failures, reasons, inborn weaknesses, childhood fears and how you could overcome them. It helps kids realise their own.

13. Growth can be vertical or horizontal. If you are the master of any particular art, skill or subject your growth is vertical. It is like getting a Noble Prize in one area and not aware of anything else. Horizontal growth involves multiple subject knowledge. It is preferred up to certain age in children. Simple mathematical intelligence, basic scientific knowledge, liking for literature, interest in sports, hobbies like gardening, cooking, painting or music make the child versatile. On this foundation he can build up according to his liking.

14. The most important of all is respecting the spouse. If you don't, you children also don't. Never be sarcastic or scold or belittle the spouse in their presence. Children also cannot bear heated arguments between their parents. They need the love of parents *who love each other.*

    A tenth class student was a top ranker till seventh class and suddenly dropped to a level below-par. The initial investigations revealed nothing. The student was intelligent, industrious and no likings for T.V., chatting etc. He had a separate room to study.

    It was really a challenging case for the psychologist. After further probe, it was discovered that the boy, though appeared normal outwardly, was on the verge of deep depression. Reason was simple.

    Every day his father used to come home late in an inebriated condition and the couple had quarrels before retiring to bed. When the stillness settles, the boy in the adjacent room sobbed with an unsecured melancholic feeling. His interest for studies and life thus deteriorated.

All children wished their mothers on mother's day.
A brave child sent a message
To her grandmother.
'Thank you granny…
For giving me a wonderful mom.'

Manners:

People are ruder today than they were few decades ago. Reasons vary. They are more rushed and 'time poor' than ever before. Even movies influence. Unlike in old films, the heroes don't listen to their parents (mainly fathers). They treat their teachers as buffoons. They tease the heroines sadistically till they say 'yes'. There is no difference between these characters and a child killing his mother for not paying money for purchasing a two wheeler.

Teach your children manners. They need not touch your feet every morning, but teach them how to be polite with elders, particularly with 'your' parents. Before dealing with children, check-up: Do you

1. React *violently* to the poor telemarketing girl?
2. Allow your children to be noisy at restaurants and functions?
3. Throw the garbage outside of the bin, spit in public places and smoke without taking opposite person's permission?
4. Casually watch your friend's ringing cell phone while passing it to him to know who is calling on the other side?
5. Believe that messages bring life-changes and have the habit of checking them immediately on receiving them, and replying unmindful of people around?
6. Wait until reaching the counter in a supermarket queue and fumble in your bag for your purse or for cash or credit card, after the cashier hands over the bill?
7. Have the habit of talking loudly to the person nearby you?
8. Chew with full open mouth or blow your nose in front of people?
9. Discuss constipation and gastric troubles while eating?
10. Have the good habit of enquiring whether the other person is busy before starting phone conversation?
11. Press the same floor button when the person in lift already did so?
12. Try to board a train before passengers alight?
13. Gossip, joke and smile at funeral places?

Do you know? A magazine invited answers for a question: 'Who is most idiotic and uncivilised person?' One of the selected answers were, 'A person who talks loudly in his cell in the middle of the night in a train'

Experience with my father and son:

What is my qualification to write on art of parenting? My failure... Yes..! Let me explain it before concluding this chapter. I failed one year each in my fifth and sixth standards. I was my grandfather's pampered child. When I failed my sixth, my grand pa (Deputy Tahasildar, a highly influential post in those days) called the head-master home and chided him why he failed me. The noble teacher said that he would promote me if I could render the fourth table. That was my standard.

After the demise of my grandfather, I went to stay with my father who was relatively poor. I was in my sixth class (second year). I remember him in-scripting lessons on white papers to save money on text books. He used to teach the kids from our street for an hour in the evening free of cost on the exterior veranda of our small house. He said, "Your head-master failed you because you could not deliver even the fourth table. Isn't it? Now I want you to memorise up to 40th table. How much time do you require?"

"Four days" I said and could make it. Well, the result was... the following year I scored cent per cent in maths and then never looked back. I broke the fifty-year-old record of my school in Hyderabad and was college first in graduation, had the privilege of one-year remission in article-ship in Chartered Accountancy and was youngest executive in the Bank. When an average and failed student like me can do all this, why can't your child? Just spend one hour every weekend and verify how your child is progressing and see the astonishing results.

As I said earlier, while studying eighth class I rendered tuitions to younger students. I told the same concept to my son, who was a *state* ranker in his intermediate. While working as an industrial trainee at the age of 17 for a stipend of 1500 per month, he completed graduation in the evening college (University third) and also C.A. He joined at the World Bank but resigned later, completed M.B.A from INSEAD and is now working with a global management consulting firm for a salary of around ten million per annum. His wife is India ranker in her Chartered Accountancy. My intention to share my experiences with my father and my son is to inspire parents, particularly from middle class.

A son's revelation:

Hai..! My name is Rick and my father's name is Dick. Sounds funny..! But my life is not that amusing. When I was in my mother's womb, the umbilical cord twisted around my neck and there was no proper supply of oxygen to my brain and I was born with cerebral palsy. I could neither walk nor talk,

Doctors told my parents that I would be like a vegetable for the rest of my life. Unwilling to accept, my mother spent hours teaching me the alphabet with sandpaper letters and posting signs on every object in the house. In a short amount of time, I learnt the alphabet. At the age of 11, after some persistence from my parents, I was fitted with a computer that enabled me to communicate. With this device, I was also able to attend public school for the first time.

I went on to graduate from Boston University with a degree in special education and later worked in a computer lab helping to develop systems to aid people with disabilities in communication and other tasks.

Once I saw a marathon race in television. People ran miles and miles to advocate AIDS awareness. Then I asked my father, "Dad, will you take part in an Ironman triathlon with me?"

He said without hesitation, "Yes."

For those who don't know, Ironman is the toughest race organized by the World Triathlon Corporation. The race encompasses three endurance events of a 3.86 kilometre *ocean swim*, followed by 180.2 kilometre *bike ride* and 42.1 kilometre *marathon run*. Most Ironman events have a strict time limit of 17 hours to complete the race, where the race starts at 7:00 AM, the mandatory cut off for the swim is 2 hours 20 minutes, the bike time is 5:30 PM and everything must complete by midnight.

My 37 years old father was not a runner. He practiced with a bag of cement in the wheelchair. After a rigorous one year practice he was ready. We both went on to complete the marathon together.

My dad attached a cord to his waist and pulled my boat in the sea for the swimming portion of the race.

I still remember how fast he pedaled the cycle to complete the 180 kilometer distance in about 9 hours, pulling my two-seater bicycle along with his bike.

Then he ran next 42 kilometres pushing me in a special cart.

After our race I said, "Dad, when I'm running, it feels like I'm not handicapped."

Having noticed the pleasure and enjoyment in my eyes, he wanted to give me the same experience again. He was able to improve his fitness so much that even while pushing me, he was able to obtain a personal record of a 5k in 17 minutes. We both have completed 900 marathons so far. My father wanted to show the world not only what a man can do if he *really* want to do, but also what a real affection would mean.

A daughter's revelation:

Ms Kristina from Philippines writes about her mother: "I don't think anybody has a mother like ours. When all the children from our royal families ate omelettes, bread butter and jam for breakfast, she served us fruits and milk in concern with fitness. Ice creams and cokes were ration commodities.

Despite having many servants, she made us to carry out many works that were forbidden under Child Labour Act. They included cooking, washing clothes, dishes, cleaning up our rooms, maintaining tidiness of our toilets etc. She made laziness our first enemy. She never allowed us to lie under any circumstances. At any given time she knew the whereabouts of each of her five children and never excused a delay, without proper reason or prior permission.

We were never given an opportunity to smoke a cigarette, spend an evening with boyfriend, drink wine or spend a late night party. This is how she regulated our childhood… All by affection, not by control..!

Despite her hectic daily schedule, she never missed a day to talk to us. She taught the power of prayer, values and morals. We were not able to realise at that age how indirectly she was helping us in developing our communication skills when she encouraged us to her bedside stories to her and queried like a child. She also used to tell us her horrid experiences and life in fear when she was in exile in forests along with my father.

When my father was shot in his head with a pistol as he opposed the autocracies of the then dictator President Macros, I have seen my mother's determination to draw out our country from martial law and repression.

At that time 75% of our land was in 2% of people. Half a million women in our country were living by prostitution.

Yes. I am telling about my mother Cory Aquino, my country's President, who was just an ordinary housewife, challenged a dictator and came to power as a 'clean-up mom'. The politically inexperienced homemaker and mother of five children took the reins as the President of one of the world's most volatile nations and had to survive 6 coups.

My mother has 16 honorary degrees and several awards like *Woman of the Year* by Time magazine and *Canadian International Prize* for Freedom.

But still I consider her simplicity as a mother is her greatest virtue. I remember my mother spending time with her grandchildren, watching their handwriting and correcting the spelling mistakes though being the President of the country.

It is my dream to raise my children like my mother. The present world lacks mothers like her".

Teach your daughter to distinguish
Between Flattery and compliment
A man who lusts her and who loves her
Views her properly or as a property,
And then
Teach your son to be that kind of a man*

FOURTH STEP

FAME AND MONEY ARE LIKE THE STARS IN THE SKY
YOU CANNOT RAISE YOUR HEAD, JUMP AND CATCH;
BEND DOWN AND CONCENTRATE IN YOUR WORK
THE STARS THEMSELVES WOULD COME DOWN
TO YOUR FEET

FAME AND MONEY

THE WAVES OF FAME

FAME IS A RELATIVE TERM.
A COMEDIAN GETS MORE APPLAUSE
THAN A NOBEL LAUREATE
DEPENDING ON THE AUDIENCE

You cannot count the apples in a seed but can count the seeds in an apple. The seeds in you are your strong points. And the countless apples in the seed are your achievements.

Fame springs celebrity status commanding great degree of public fascination. A celebrity influences other people by his knowledge, principles, wealth, and with charisma in show business, social service, sports or political and administrative power.

On the negative side, mafia leaders also enjoy celebrity status. Few people in their 'own range of ways' stoop down to get star status by bribing the media and appearing in news, occupying the stage at uncalled public functions, by donating black money or sometimes by complete accident. When a person becomes a celebrity in a very short period, it is called '*instant personage status.*'

I know at least three universities that give you Doctorates for one or two lakhs of rupees. This chapter does not deal with such accidental, forced, artificial and instant successes.

Fame is like a fragrance originating from the house to spread to unlimited horizons. Few people like Tendulkar and Mandolin Srinivas got the celebrity status in their young age. You may not be a child prodigy but don't you agree that the most beautiful thing is to know that the reason for your parents' proud smile is '*you*'.

Do you command reputation in your house? Are you popular in your college… if so for what? Are you talented at least in one field such as education, sports, painting, singing, oratory or any other skill? Do your siblings ask you to explain concepts of their lessons? Do your parents discuss financial matters and investments if you have crossed teenage? Do they confide in you? How do your neighbours feel about you? Do they look at you as '*ideal*' to their child?

What do your office colleagues feel about you? Do they admire you for your plain heartedness, communication skills, intelligence, truthfulness and leadership qualities? Are you a leader or a follower? Do you get at least ten votes if you stand in the elections?

When you get a Padmasree or Bharatha Ratna you are known to the country. Nobel Prize is the ultimate. Of course, there are more talented and service oriented philanthropists unknown to the world, worthier than Nobel laureates and Padmabhushans.

Now the final question is what amount of respect do you have 'for yourself'? Are you proud of you? For what? What are your good qualities and what are you doing to enhance them?

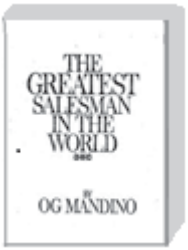
Can you sell yourself?

When a customer enters a cloth shop, the salesman invites her with a smile. First he shows very ordinary sarees. He knows that no woman prefers to buy the first saree placed before her. He pulls out some more sarees. He does not lose his patience, when she wants to look further. At a particular point he suddenly recognises the *spark* in her eyes. But she is still uncertain. Then he starts impressing her with the qualities of the saree and how it suits her. He wins playing on her ego and indecision.

When you want to sell yourself, raising your price is called self-promotion. There are six philosophies in the above example that many Business Schools fail to explore.

1. However tough and boring the job might be, don't lose your smile.
2. Even a good idea does not work unless the *timing* is right.
3. Be patient until the other person is helpless and seeks your advice.
4. You may have to deal with people who are indecisive. Few come to your shop (life) just to waste your time and to pass their time.
5. Utilise the opportunity to the maximum. Rich customers also visit your shop. Benefit from them and compensate your loss from the customers who wasted your time.
6. If you cheat the person who believed you, he won't come again to you. You may increase your sales price, but don't compromise with the quality or on his faith. Once you do it, he will not come to you again.

The Greatest Salesman in the world by Augustine Mandingo is a classic treasure that says how to enhance your value. Many books claim to teach the secrets of success, but this book with a mixture of spirituality and self-promotion teaches practically and metaphorically. This book has sold over 50 million copies so far.



This two-thousand-year-old tale spins around a person called Hafiz. It is set in the time 100 years prior to Christian era. Hafiz is a master salesperson, living in an elegant palace with every possible comfort. He distributes all his wealth to the poor towards the end of his life, takes his servant to a room that is locked for decades. The only object within the room is an old chest with tattered scrolls.

He says: "All my success, happiness, love, wealth and peace are directly traceable to these ten scrolls. When a star appeared in the sky, a person by name *Pathos* gave this to me recognising my good deeds. I am instructed by him to pass them on to my next successor, on whose arrival a star *re-appears* in the sky to enable me recognise him."

You will be pleasantly surprised to know who his next successor is..! Before revealing his name, let me tell you about Hafiz. He is a poor camel boy ambitious of becoming rich. He prays *Pathos*, a best salesman (of cloths and robes), to teach him the techniques of salesmanship. Reluctant *Pathos* finally gives his approval, weaves an exceptionally outstanding robe and asks the boy to sell the costliest garment within three days at a *poor settlement* called **Bethlehem**. He warns the boy that his handling of the client would determine his success in both business and life.

The boy goes to **Bethlehem** but finds no customer for such an expensive robe. While returning home unsuccessfully, the disappointed boy notices a couple beneath a cart in the freezing night with a new-born baby in their hands. The infant is shivering as the soiled cloths around him fail to warm him up.

Hafiz wraps the robe around the beautiful child and treks back.

When the boy comes back and explains in tears his failure as a salesman, *Pathos* discovers that something extraordinary has taken place as he notices a star in the sky following Hafiz from Bethlehem.

Pathos tells him that it's time now to let him know *the secrets of selling*. He gives him 10 ancient scrolls, each containing a magical formula. Following those success secrets, Hafiz becomes the greatest salesperson in the world. When Hafiz becomes old, it is his turn to tell those secrets to a person whose arrival is foretold by a 'star'.

There comes *Paul*, a disciple of Jesus. He discloses that Jesus has sent him to find the miraculous secrets to make them Public..! Hafiz understands that the child whom he covered the robe with is none other than Jesus Christ!

Ten secret scrolls:

The main principle to become the greatest salesman in the world is "Sell yourself to you, price being success". You should read the scrolls three times a day for thirty days so that the wisdom becomes a part of your subconscious mind.

> *Today I begin a new life. I shed my old skin, which hath too long suffered the bruises of failure and the wounds of mediocrity. Today I am born anew and my birthplace is a vineyard where there is fruit for all. Today I will pluck grapes of wisdom from the fullest vines.*

1. Celebrate your uniqueness. You are the greatest miracle of the nature. Every day you are reborn. Begin a new life. Love yourself, respect your efforts and don't be satisfied with anything except your work. Don't be satisfied with anything except your ethical living. Character means 'what you would do if you are certain that nobody is watching you'.

2. HABIT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE**.** Cultivate a good habit to unwind from the slavery of a bad habit.

3. A grain has no choice to choose between being crushed into bread or to be planted to multiply. You have a choice to perish or grow. A minute passed is gone forever… and so time must be traded only for things of value. Strive to make next hour better than the present one. Believe in the quality of what you are selling to multiply your value. When you set up a second goal on reaching the first one, it leads to multiplying your value.

4. Persist until you succeed. You are born to win. Remove words like quit, cannot, unable and impossible from your vocabulary. As the day ends and when you want to rest, *make one more sale* that leads to more comfortable sleep.

5. Every person before you is a wonder with a different ability. Recognise his ability than his weakness. Understand him. Forget about how he understands you. *If you hate a person, you hate something in him that is part of you.* Otherwise, what isn't part of you would not disturb you. Love is your greatest weapon. Look for the best in other people. When you meet any person, secretly tell yourself 'I love you'.

6. While in the marketplace, never waste time to be preoccupied with 'problems of home' and don't carry worries from market to the house. Spend with your family as if it is your last day. No worldly success can compensate the failure at home.

7. Speak, only when you are confident that your speech is better than your silence. Some people cause happiness 'wherever they go *in'* and some other 'whenever they go *out'*. You are the master of your emotions. Create your own weather. Force your positive actions to control your negative thoughts rather than the vice versa.

8. No matter how you feel on waking up in the morning, still you can smile. If you wear a smile you have friends; if you wear a scowl you have winkles. When things seem too serious or dismal, repeat the words, 'this too will pass' and trouble appears lighter.

9. Not every motion is an action. Dream without action is zero. Procrastination comes from fear of failure. *Failure is better than procrastination as it at least gives you an experience.*

10. Every one turns to God in a moment of anguish or terror. But a true believer in God prays for guidance, not for help. Never ask Him for material things but ask for the knowledge, love and good habits.

You are the brand ambassador for your identity and your customer is the world around. Successful people have a brand name. Multinational companies spend billions of rupees to boost up their brand name even for a tea packet or tooth paste. Do you have a brand image? Do you invest in improving self?

Brand:

Good brands have four qualities: 1. They provide an identity. 2. Project the right message 3. Instil faith and confidence 4. Save time to customers to identify them. Successful people also have five effective qualities. They appear to be simple but consider how much you are contemplating to impliment them.

1. They always think big, take up big projects and want to be first in the best. Be it a business deal or cooking or arranging a cocktail party, they leave their impression.

2. They own their work and take the responsibility for the final result. They know that they can't be good at everything and hence depend on the expertise of others. They unselfishly acknowledge other's contribution.

3. Effective people are upbeat, humble and never lazy. They radiate positive energy. They balance between physical, mental, emotional and the spiritual spheres.

4. Their sense of humour is appreciable. They are not fanatic. They are neither too workaholic nor very much addicted to pleasures.

5. They are not egoistic, in spite of their success. They know the great formula: Ego= 1/knowledge* (The more the knowledge the lesser the ego).

> *When Edmond Hillary, the first climber to Mount Everest, was asked how he could conquer when so many others had given up with avalanches, dehydrations, hypothermia and the mental fatigue, he simply replied, "I didn't really conquer the mountain. I conquered myself, my worries, weaknesses and defeats."*

The word 'worry' is derived from Anglo-Saxon word that means 'to strangle' or 'to choke'. Don't worry about the failures. Think whether the *planning* is correct. Failure is an experience. When you fail, think of doing the same thing in a different way. Failure is like denting. Without making a dent, how can you learn driving?

> *Golf balls were smooth earlier. A poor golfer played with a dented ball. It was flying more accurately than scrupulously round shaped balls. Today golf balls have as many as 432 dimples. The rough spots enhance the precision. The dents are called experiences.*

'Staying in success' is more difficult than attaining it. If you stop working after first success, people say that your success is just luck. Make success a *continuous* process. It is called developing your own brand: Base, Reputation, Achievement, Net worth and Dividend.

Base: Do your friends feel your absence when you don't attend a party or abstain from going to a movie with them? Do your family members feel the vacuum when you are away from home? If your answer is in the affirmative, you have a brand image. It starts from a smaller circle and bosoms into a universal identification. Your affection, communication, smile, pleasantness, values, leadership qualities and intelligence constitute your 'Base'. Enrich it persistently. There are people in whose company we feel happy, relaxed and pleasant. They are confident but humble. Their reflections are soothing. Develop those friendships.

Reputation: Celebrities with false reputation hallucinate that they have respect. A person devoid of character cannot claim respect. What is your integrity? How much can you borrow without a promissory note or security? How many people come to your rescue in case you need help? It depends on your reputation.

Achievement: When I went to the opening function of my hero's film immediately after my multi-starrer big budget directorial venture failed, no one offered me even a cup of tea and bothered to offer me a seat. Our brand image is thus directly proportionate to our immediate accomplishments.

Net worth: Enhancement of net worth means adding something either to your wisdom (creation) or heart (recreation). In other words, it is 'Today minus Yesterday' (t-y). There is no greatness in being superior to some other person. *The true greatness lies in being superior to your previous self.* Your Net-worth should improve along with time. For example, 'may be' you are not aware of the difference between loneliness and solitude till you read this book. Thus you have enhanced your knowledge today. Listening to a new raga, enjoying a perfect holiday, knowing how to cook… everything is either creation or recreation.

Dividend: Animals lead routine life. They can never increase net worth in their lifetime. They can't even smile also. Nature has given this dividend (boon) only to mankind. If you have lived a day without enhancement of your pleasures or wisdom or not smiled for a single time during the day, consider that you lived a day like an animal.

Lack of direction:

A foreigner purchases a city-map at the airport and picks up a 3 star hotel to stay in. The cab driver drops the tourist at a cheap and lousy hotel by the same name. The confused tourist checks-in adjusting that it is the standard of a three star hotel in the city.

Next day he wants to visit a famous lake adjacent to a fort just a few kilometres away. But the cab takes more than three hours. The foreigner figures out that he has been cheated by the driver.

He climbs the fort and to his surprise, there is no lake anywhere close. He enquires with the guide, who tells him that it was buried under the ruins almost a century ago and it is history now. He returns to the hotel more confused. The guide book says that the lake near the fort is still a tourist attraction..!

With the bewilderment, he spends a disturbed night. Next day while going to the museum, he accidentally spots archaeology department office. He resolves to crack the mystification, cancels his further visit and enquires with the officials about the disappeared lake. They say that there is no fort whatsoever in the vicinity at least 100 kilometres forget about the lake.

He understands that he 'did' travel hundred kilometres the previous day and the taxi driver is at no fault. On the other hand, he is completely confused with the topography of the city. At this stage the archaeology official points out that the map in the foreigner's hands does not pertain to their city.

Stephan Covey gives similar illustration how we miss our goals with an improper road map. We adjust in a small dingy hotel (in life), travel pointlessly, cannot find the target, feel like being cheated, blame others and finally realise that the mistake lies with us and it is too late by then.

An axe stands for self-administration. It raises head straight, keeps the handle intact and lands accurately on the target. If it misses target, adjusts immediately. After piercing from one angle, it goes to the other side and thus knows how to reach its goal. It stops a while to sharpen before striking again teaching us about continuous self-betterment.

Individual as a self-sculpture:

Why people feel the vacuum at middle age? Let us analyse the reasons.

A three year old boy hides behind the sofa, crawls out, runs holding an imaginary bus steering, and changes the TV channels unnecessarily. Ask him why he is doing all this, he has no answer. It is just for passing time and pleasure.

The reasons for his aimless behaviour are: 1. He has no specific goal 2. He has nothing else to do to while-away his time. 3. His bubbling energies have no other outlet till he goes to school.

A teenager does not run holding an imaginary bus steering. If he does so, we say he is not matured. His thrills are different, watching movies on the first day first show, spending hours in window shopping, dancing in the pub and to drive rashly. Ask him why he is doing all this; he says it is for pleasure and enjoying life.

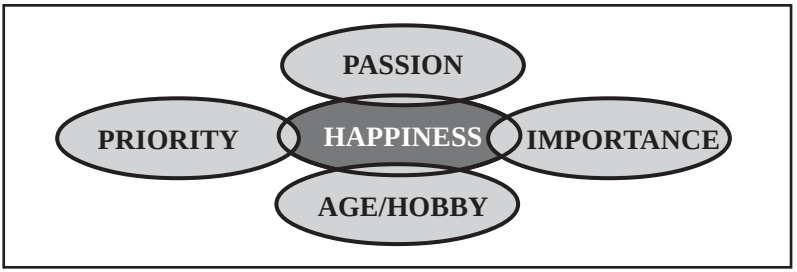
If a fifty years old man whistles in the theatre, we say he is not yet matured. He does not have stamina and energy for dancing in the pubs. Then what can he do at that age for pleasure or time-pass? Nothing but watching TV or go to a club or listening to a Swami.

The above example of three generations shows that, if you change your tastes along with your age, you land up nowhere after middle age. But if a kid cultivates a hobby from his childhood like painting (Akaine), games (Viswanadhan Anand), music (M.S. Subbalaxmi) or education (Ramanujam), he never gets bored at a later age. *These people did not (need not) change their pleasure points frequently under the guise of maturity*. With experience they become more professional as well loved their job.

This is called self-sculpting. The theory of sculpting your life can be simplified in one sentence. IF YOUR HOBBIES ARE VACILLATING AND UNPRODUCTIVE, YOU CHANGE THEM FREQUENTLY AND AT THE MIDDLE AGE YOU WOULD NOT BE HAPPY WITH YOUR UNPRODUCTIVE HOBBIES BECAUSE YOU CANNOT CHANGE THEM AT THAT STAGE AND SLOWLY YOU BECOME AN ESCAPIST.

Sculpting revolves around four permutations: Passion for the job, Importance, Priority and Age.

Why a poor student with disabled parents does not work part time realising the *importance* of money? Why an executive does work 16-hours a day but claims that his family is his first *priority?* Why a girl, whose passion is 'dance' studies medicine reluctantly and fails? Why happiness does not grow along with our *age*?



If you are an IAS student, your *priority* would be studies; your other spheres of *importance* are parents, maintaining good health etc. Your *passion* may be cricket and *hobby* face-book.

Life is a combination of two alternative paths. ***One***: To reach long time happiness through short time pleasures. ***Two***: To stay in quick-fix pleasures. If you find that your passion for cricket is dominating, you should shift it to less time consuming game like chess; and reduce 'Face-booking'. That is first alternative. If you prioritise Face-book and cricket, then you are in quick-fix short term pleasures.

Associate your objective with your *passion.* If you are fascinated by power and want to help poor, go into politics or work for a N.G.O. Writing or painting may go well with you if you are an introvert. If you are interested in roaming, aim for a travelling profession.

When we were shooting a Tele-serial at Rohtang pass of Himalayas, I was startled when the young taxi driver told that he was a sub-inspector, resigned his job and purchased a taxi. Explaining the reason he said, "I am fascinated by cars Saab. In another ten years I want to be an executive of a travel company with a fleet of taxies including Mercedes Benz and B.M.Ws." Perfect mixture of hobby, passion, importance and priority...!

Suppose you are happy to spend at Coffee Day with friends. One evening you experiment and find an innovative way to move a toy car with steam. Everybody congratulates you. It's a small but thrilling achievement. Now you would find **RECOGNITION** more pleasurable than enjoying at Coffee shop, a new window opening with new set of goals.

The ant theory *:

Ants have no supervisors but still they work relentlessly. A motivational guru developed 'Ants Philosophy' suggesting correct way of planning.

1. Ants never quit. Keep a finger obstructing their path, they won't just stand there and stare but will try and go around it.
   Lesson: Challenge the obstacles; keep looking for alternative routes, rather than resigning the job.

2. Ants foresee the future. They work more during summer for the dooms-day of the coming winter.
   Lesson: Don't be careless when the going is good. Save for a rainy day.

3. Ants are optimistic. While suffering through the winter, they keep reminding that it won't last forever. And with the first rays of the summer sun, they come out - ready to work, ready to play.
   Lesson: when you are down and seemingly out, don't get depressed with what looks like a never-ending crisis.

4. Ants are selfless. They neither worry about how much food another ant is collecting. They just do their bit.
   Lesson: The first reason for unhappiness is comparison and jealousy.

5. An ant can carry 20 times more than its own weight.
   Lesson: *We can carry burdens far heavier than we would imagine.*

If you were to compose music for your life,
Know the basic ragas first.
Play as if you are the best, and enjoy the best
Because you are the only audience
In your auditorium called life.

GOAL MAPPING

DETERMINATION TO COMPLETE A JOB
IS DIFFERENT FROM
STUPIDITY TO HOLD ON FAILURE

A girl from Guntur wrote about her horrifying problem. The motherless girl was timid and introvert. Almost every night her father raped her. We advised her. She somehow escaped to Delhi and joined the defence services. After three years, she was proud to declare that during her tenure, she had subjected an army officer to court martial for making a pass at her. The letter reflected her self-confidence. She was even more confident when she came to meet us personally. That was the girl's inherent strength that she had brought it out at the right time and put it to the right use.

All of us pass through good and bad days. At times *we fear to trust our abilities.* Dream killers, both external and internal become so overwhelming that we want to give up. Just ask one question! "*What is the reason for my failure?"* Think. Analyse. Differentiate between a '*glamorous'* goal and the '*right'* goal. Do not select the glamorous one just because it sounds great or it was chosen by many. It may become worthless by the time you reach there. Secondly and most importantly, you should assess your competencies while planning the career. An intermediate student, if hard-pressed by the parents beyond his capabilities to sit for I.I.T entrance, may lose his rank even in normal engineering entrance exams.

Many people envisage more than their capacity and waste their time on the project. Dreaming high is a positive sign, but dreaming beyond capacity is unproductive. This is a delicate and controversial debate.

I translated a book, 'IDLY ORCHID AND THE SKY', a true story about a hotelier called Kamat, who starts his career in a small way, assisting his father even cleaning the tables. He contemplates to construct a five star hotel in Mumbai through bank loans and capital from friends. When the half-finished building collapses, he attempts suicide. With a dramatic event, he recovers, finishes the job and wins the prestigious world's best hotel award.

Faith is different from overconfidence. When the first copy of the film is ready, the producer should have faith. Otherwise he cannot invest on advertisement to support for its success.

Take the example of this book. Being a novice to English market, I don't know its commercial propositions. I worked on this book for two years, taking suggestions and correcting the mistakes, setting aside *more financially viable* projects. I have already read this 400 pages script twenty times and am still finding few mistakes to correct, or scope for betterment.

When asked about their professional goals, around sixty per cent of high school students say that they want to become IAS, IITians, doctors and scientists. Realistic aims are different from imaginary goals. Goals are based on three aspects: Capacity, Scope and Possibility.

1. Capacity: Suppose you wish to become a business tycoon. Can you raise the required capital? Of course, there are people who rose from rags to riches. But assess your qualities. Don't dream of establishing a multinational company with small financial background. Start in a small way and develop. Associate with people who are in the same business. Next… think of your mental capacity. Can you take the risks? Are you *anxiety-prone* or do you have a shock absorber in you? If you are predisposed to pressure, you are taking the risk of your health by selecting an area where day-to-day tensions are common. After deciding your goal expand your capacity, start building up from foundation.

2. Scope: There is 'scope' for a mobile bar in trains. Take a compartment on lease and run a bar attached to the train. It may be possible if you are influential at parliament level. If you want to establish man-pulled rickshaw factory, forget the idea. There is no scope. How about taking first floor of the railways station on lease and showing films at cheap rates to the waiting passengers?

3. Possibility: Dream but don't dream too much about your possibilities. If you wish to transport people from earth to moon, it may not be a practical proposition, at least in this decade. If you want to establish a five star hotel without a single rupee from your side, first join a hotel as an executive or even as a waiter. Plan..! Make associates. Build contacts. Learn things. Wait for the opportunity. Don't jump into business. Enter.

Goals are not dreams. Make them a reality. Design short-term goals to reach lifetime goals progressively. Here are the life goals.

Personal Goals: Which type of a girl/boy you want to marry? Where do you want to stay, in a town or a village? Do you want to be independent or work for somebody? What sort of hobbies would you enjoy if you could do whatever you liked? They are your personal goals.

Financial goals: What are your Assets and Liabilities; Capacities and Abilities; Income and Expenditure? How much do you want to earn, by what age and what do you want to do with it? Where would you want to live? What sort of home would you like to have? Is it a mansion in a city or a palace in a village? Would you like to tour Europe? Go to Disneyland? Would you like to own a pet and a luxury car? Go ahead and think freely. Your imagination is your limitation.

Family Goals: Developing family relations is also a goal. Enjoy life with your spouse, children, brothers, sisters, and with a kindred partner. Can you express love? We discussed about this earlier. Have you ever trimmed the hair of your brother once or massaged your grandpa's back?

Intellectual Goals: Intellectual goals encourage life of curiosity and self-education. Books, magazines, talks, speeches, seminars, courses and the world of the internet are your resources. Fortunately millions of opportunities of unparalleled academic advancement are available in the present millennium.

Pleasure goals: Make sure to spend some of your time for making yourself happy. There is nothing greater than it. Don't believe if somebody says, *'our work is our happiness'*. We discussed about workaholic tendencies. Every work need not be commercially productive. Unproductive works also give happiness if they are unselfish and healthy. Philanthropy is one. A prophet said, 'If a person allows his day to pass without practicing generosity he is like a bellow of a blacksmith that breathes but does not live'.

Physical Goals: You can't change genetics or avoid ill-health but you don't have to waddle through life either. Are you regularly watching your weight, exercising and getting enough sleep? Do you practice breathing exercises if you are cold-prone? Are you allotting some time to reduce stress and align your priorities? Have you chosen a life sport? Physical goals thus keep you fit and healthy.

Attitude goals: Negative mind-set holds you back from progress. If your behaviour upsets you, fix an objective to change. For example if you suffer from fear of failure, set a goal to improve your approach.

Social Goals: Are you an entertainer? Do you appreciate friendships? Do you offer counsel and comfort? Are you well-mannered and polite? OR do you love solitariness? Love to be egoistic? Do you want to be reserved and less spoken? Both life styles are ok in their own perspective but be specific and follow it.

Investment Goals: Investment goals demand you to sacrifice some part of today's comfort for tomorrow. Short-term savings, long term investments and insurance constitute these goals.

Career Goals: Do you hold such a position that your employer cannot afford to lose you? Will you work a part-time or overtime if you require money? Will you go back to school or training institutes to improve your job skills? Do you intend to start your own business? Career goals place you in a position to earn money to have all the material possessions for you and your family.

Cultural Goals: Cultural goals fill your life with *beauty* and *flavour*. When did you go to the theatre to watch a play or a concert? Do you enjoy music or painting in solitude? Are you savouring fine food? Do you enjoy picnics and visits to various places? Are you reading great books? If your answers are on the negative, who or what is stopping you from living well? A person without any cultural goal lives but does not live the life.

Community Goals: Community service goals offer you an opportunity to give back. Can you volunteer to work for a local cause? Do you donate? Would you run a marathon to raise money for the needy?

Artistic goals: You are the most fortunate to have these goals. But if you want to be a writer, painter, musician or actor, you require basic natural abilities. And then, you have to have a 'will' to build further on that foundation.

> *I was from Hindi medium and novice to Telugu literature. Though my father and my maternal grandfather were poets, I could not construct a complicated sentence; and don't even know the meaning of simple words. But when I wanted to be a writer, I started going through Telugu grammar, poetry and works of legends. I was pleasantly surprised to find many technicians developing the same way in literary and film fields.*

Journey towards the goal:

In the initial stages of life, we cannot choose a job of our interest and choice. We have to work against our wishes for financial reasons.

1. First engage in a job to settle financially.
2. Later try to shift to the field that you are interested in, if such a field is financially viable.
3. If your talent is not financially viable to earn a livelihood, make it your hobby and continue with your job. Then you would not be bored with routineness.
4. Work on your hobby if your talent is commercially feasible and one day it may become your profession.

A young boy, interested in singing may have to start his career as a typist in a remote village for a living. He need not get depressed or over-ambitious to leave the job immediately. Firstly he has to pool some money, visit city at regular intervals, test his luck at studios and check the scope for part time singing or dubbing. Secondly, he has to search for a job or opportunity to stay in the city permanently. Soon he would know whether his talent is adequate to make enough money for living, or it is only his hallucination about his abilities. If he finds his talent inadequate, he should learn, try further to improve. He can also join musical troops, or engage in reality shows to satiate his interest for singing.

Every goal need not give you money, fame or make family bond stronger. Positive mental **SATISFACTION** is the ultimate. It has no logic. We have great poets like Pothana, Tyagaraju and Annamayya who created great works neither for money nor fame. It is for their satisfaction. They meditated in their work for the divine bliss.

When my novel Prema (love) was serialised, the readers' response was not encouraging. I knew that they did not like the plot. The editor also requested me to close it at the earliest. However, I wanted to make it a poetic piece and carved every sentence. If the same efforts were put in a commercial theme, it would have become a best seller. But as said earlier, *satisfaction has no logic.*

Change in goal

One should be *firm* about the goals but *flexible* about the path. Good job may provide a *comfortable* living, but an interesting profession gives a *satisfactory* living.

> *I was not happy with my bank job though financially comfortable. I was the chief of Small Scale Industries department and was free to travel over entire India. It was neither a strenuous job nor great responsibility involved. But my interest was theatre. As you know, writing 'plays' is not viable financially. I shifted to fiction to quench my thirst for writing. When it was fetching some money, I resigned the job and was very happy being a professional writer.*
>
> *When my son faced the same problem, bored with the 'routineness' of World Bank job, I advised him to resign even though it was lucrative and prestigious job and go for higher studies making way for a more challenging job. I believe in the concept, 'If you are a fish and do not like the water in your pond, come out and die rather than staying in there.'*

Change in the goal is recommended in the following cases:

➢ **For better benefits:** It is like a playwright opting to enter into movie field for more fame and monetary benefits; an engineering college lecturer setting up his own factory for better future, an employee starting his own franchise.

➢ **Changes in priorities:** Cinematographers, costume designers, producers and actors bored with the routineness take up film-direction for more ego satisfaction, authority, and to prove their creative abilities.

➢ **Age factor:** It is like a retired cricketer shifting to golf, a boxer joining as a coach in a gym.

➢ **Health disorders:** If a medico wants to be a neurosurgeon, but finds his fingers trembling due to nerve-problem, he has to re-set his goal as a paediatrician or general physician.

Never stop after reaching a goal. Set another one. Once you enter the comfort zone and relax, you feel tired and age begins to show up. We discussed about the concept of rest house theory in the earlier chapter. Work unto the last. Work till your body cooperates. Work need not be for earning money. Engaging in an interesting activity keeps you dynamic.

We stick on to goals wasting time, defending our defeat, weakness and mistakes, may be due to our ego and unwillingness to accept our failure. The idiom, 'Search where you lost' is not always correct. My critic friends ask, "You preach that '*failure is the step to success and one should try continuously not getting discouraged*'. Then why did you stop directing films after failure?"

"After working for two films, I realised that direction requires abundant patience and stamina which I lack. I prefer a sitting job. Secondly the satisfaction while writing is an immediate gratification, whereas in the case of film making, it is a process for which the result is known only after a year. Thirdly, the film is a combined effort. I cannot cope up with people. I do not have such a leader in me. Lastly, there is no point when my failure results in loss of crores to the producer."

"You are justifying your failure with your pseudo-reasons" some people retort. I think I am not. Instead of acknowledging own weakness, and reversing the decision at the right hour, we perpetuate the situation. It's entirely different when you are confident about your success.

For my first four novels, there were no publishers. Still, I continued because, firstly I like the job of writing, secondly I was confident that I would succeed someday and more notably there was no financial loss in writing. I believed a break-through some time. It happened with the release of my fifth novel "Tulasidalam". I never looked back again.

We are human beings, not programmed devices. Our life is a pre-paid card with limited accountability. If one is going to live for another 50 years, he has just 2500 weekends. Keep weekends for relaxation. For some people there are no weekends. Contrary to it, every day is weekend for some others.

A young chartered accountant from an extraordinarily rich family raised a question in my class, "I sleep till seven in the morning. Go to office at ten. Come home and go out with my friends or my wife. I watch TV for some time and sleep. You are telling about hard work, goal setting, developing strengths etc. Do you think my life is a waste?" I said, "Not at all. Provided you keep in mind the six Aiswaryas. I am the first man to support your style of living if your health is good, people love you and you have some degree of recognition. And please note that I never use the word 'hard work' in my speech. Never…"

Lemon and the spoon:

Review your weaknesses and change your priorities. Running after money and fame is like driving a car with throbbing back pain. It can be compared to children participating in a race with a spoon in their mouth and coming first at the end *without a lemon on it*.

"Bliss is like a spring" says Aristotle "…it was not there and suddenly the whole climate is different. One never knows from where it will start, which tree will taste the first bloom. Same way, nobody can say which part of the body blossoms fist. It can be love – your heart; intelligence - your head. Suddenly you will be outpouring yourself, silence into expression, or your expression into silence."

I toured on the rooftops of the busses with my drama troop due to money constraints and later travelled in executive class. I failed in my sixth class, but later had the privilege of one year remission in articleship by passing C.A inter exam in first attempt with rank. 'Failure' is caused by NI (no interest) and OI (other interests). A student who can't understand what is a *catalyst*, doesn't have interest in chemistry (NI). He cannot concentrate if his mother is watching TV in next room (OI).

A guy was good at convincing his co-students holding a pack of cigarettes, "I don't want to end my life without enjoying the pleasure of smoking. After all, our life is a one-time affair". Everybody agreed and lit the cigarettes except one. "Are you not convinced with my philosophy?" asked the former. "Really excellent..! Enjoying life with new experiments… yes… It's a stimulating idea. Good thinking. I am for it" said the boy Vishnu. The lad smiled, "Then you are not courageous enough to follow it. I pity you. One should have guts to try something new." All boys cheered.

Vishnu went to them after three years with a gold medal, "When you said 'everything should be experienced once in life', I was influenced by those words. I thought why should I not experience being a university topper. Thank you for your suggestion."

I don't know the formula for success,
But I certainly know for failure
It is the inability to prioritise between
Non-negotiable core-values and other trivial concerns.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

IF OTHERS CANNOT UNDERSTAND YOU,
THE MISTAKE IS YOURS.
IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND OTHERS,
EVEN THEN THE MISTAKE IS YOURS.

A silent social worker or an introvert scientist may get a Nobel Prize. Good communication need not be a pre-requisite for fame but good communiqué certainly helps enhancing reputation. 'Speech is silver, silence is gold' is an old quote. Talking right is *platinum.* The art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right place; but also not to utter a *wrong thing* at the tempting moment.

He was a cancer patient and was told by doctors that he might not live longer. He had no children and was living with his wife. She also died. His friend consoled him on his wife death, "You are fortunate…! Oh… your wife also died. I am happy to know." People around thrashed him.

Fact is different from feeling. Fact is a thing absorbed to you through five sensory organs. Feeling is how you interpret them. 'Fact' is physical. 'Feeling' is psychological.

What the friend meant was, 'Anyway you are going to die. Now God had severed all your relation. Be cheerful.'

Though his intentions were good, the language, expression, occasion and most importantly the timing were wrong. Communication requires clarity of thought. Ask for clarifications while listening when you don't understand properly. Keep in mind the standard of the listener while talking; his emotions, prejudices and beliefs. You tell a story to your friend and ask him to pass on to the next three, and let the fifth one write it. It would be totally different.

A newspaper said: "Police fired when Maoists stormed a police station injuring eleven of them." The readers are in jeopardy to understand whether the injured were Maoists or police.

THE ART OF PRIVATE SPEAKING

*One of the best neurosurgeons, famous for his remarkable professional skills operated on a three-year-old girl for six hours for brain injury. As he was coming out the anxiously awaiting parents enquired about their child. The beaming surgeon said, "Excellent. He is fine and will recover soon". The worried parents screamed in unison, "Not HE... she... she!!" Wiping out the sweat on his forehead and rushing for a cup of tea before another complicated operation, the impassive doctor said "Oh…Yes. Girl...! Complex surgery… very challenging… We even video graphed it... Very helpful to medicos..! She will be discharged in ten days". **

The doctor belongs to his profession and not to the client. He is indeed truthful to his duty, but neither friendly with words nor emotionally passionate. Contrary to this, some people are great with words but are never reliable. Being good both at profession and to the people is a virtue.

Self-awareness, Interpersonal-propensity, self-direction and emotion-control are four main spheres in communication. 'Awareness' is, apprehending own mood while talking. 'Interpersonal propensity' consists of understanding the emotional state of the opposite person. 'Direction' is the ability to alter personal mood. Altering temperament according to the situation is 'emotion control'.

People do four mistakes while communicating:

1) Fumbling of words: Using inappropriate words, 'Rama on the command of his father went to forest'. You find this wrong usage at some places in this book also.

2) Jumbling of thoughts: Not narrating in sequential order: 'Ravana captivated Sita. Sita went to forest along with her husband. Rama went to forest because…'

3) Missing links between the characters: 'Rama went to forest along with his brother and his wife Sita'. Whose wife is Sita?

4) Not completing the answer, assuming that the opposite person would understand it: Q: How do you weigh a cat with a weighing machine? A: By keeping milk in front of it. This is not the complete answer.

You require atleast three from the five potential abilities to enhance your reputation: Intelligence, Knowledge, Diplomacy, Public relations and philanthropy..! The more you develop these relations, the more is your fame. If you are a student, executive or an employee, develop intelligence, knowledge and quick reflex actions to enhance your celebrity status. People should feel the thrill with your kaleidoscopic knowledge and vocabulary.

Indulge in a mental exercise whenever you are free. Recite backwards Z to A, explain the kid why the sea-waves come towards land, how an electrical cooker automatically switches off when the rice is cooked, conduct a mock interview, sketch your bed room without observing it, recollect the events on your previous birthday and sum up your achievements during the previous year. Instead of gossiping about films and sports, think of new concepts and discuss with friends. How about showing films in railway chair car compartments, or selling cinema tickets at reduced rates to fill up the vacant seats in the last minute (like in certain flights)?

Continuous mental exercise gives you the stamina for creative thoughts. If you are a team leader or head of the family, communication to each member is to be precise to the core.

*Some students could not wake up on time due to a late night party, and missed a class-test on 'communication skills'. They requested the professor to hold the exam again on next day, lying that one of the student's father met with an accident late night and they were all attending him at the hospital. The professor accepted their valid reason, and conducted the test next day. The topic was 'Communication and team building'. There was only one question for hundred marks with four alternative answers: 'Was the patient injured on a) Leg b) Hand c) Head d) None of these?'**

The talk principle:

Silence plays an important part in effective conversation, just as it does in music. Don't talk without pausing for a reaction. A second is too short, a minute is too long, five seconds is ideal. Give the opposite person opportunity to talk freely. Accept his intelligence. Cooperate rather than criticising. A *strong* mutual 'like' or 'dislike' stimulates the conversation. It is easy to stimulate people to talk, if you can find their pet peeved. These are the few important points in effective communication. The private talk involves four principles:

T	• **Target (With whom you are talking? What is his standard?)**
A	• **Achievement (Why are you talking? For what purpose?)**
L	• **Logic (What are you talking? Fact or your opinion?)**
K	• **Kindness (How are you talking? with which emotion?).**

Target: What is the standard of understanding of opposite person?

> *An ophthalmologist was examining a patient, 'Can you read the letters?' When the reply was in negative, he changed the lenses and repeated the question. Same was the answer. After trying the highest power lenses, the helpless doctor sighed, "Are you blind?" The old man's son said, "He does* not know *English."*

Achievement: What is the purpose? Is it beneficial to the listener?

> *"What does your husband do?" a lady asked a co-passenger in a train. "He wakes up in the morning. Brushes his teeth, finishes his bath, wears dress and then takes breakfast. He goes to the office. I am sorry. He does not go on Sundays. Of course second Saturday is holiday. He returns home and we go to bed after dinner" she replied. "Why are you telling me all this?" the lady was surprised. "Because you asked what my husband does" She said. "How am I concerned? I just enquired your husband's profession" the irritated lady said. The co-passenger countered "How are you concerned with my husband's profession?"*

Logic: Is there logic in your argument? Is it an argument or discussing mutual opinions? We speak what believe it to be true, rather than truth.

> *You say 'Dola re dola' from Devdas is a better song. Your friend says 'Kajra re kajra' from Bunty… is better. You both argue. It may lead to fist fights also. Both of you are not talking a 'truth', just airing your opinions. This is all about losing logic.*

Kindness: Are you talking softly or yelling? Inculcate the habit of speaking softly. Speak with a pleasant smile. Laugh when the opposite person cuts a joke. Express yourself when he is talking.

Coming back again to conversations in trains, the intention here is not to advise you to be dumb, serious and untouchable. Greet the person, smile and ask in a friendly tone, "How are you... How are things with you…We're having wonderful weather today…" Venture into general topics such as current news but avoid hot button political debates, elections, personal problems, other people's misfortunes, health ailments and philosophy. Go with friendly topics such as food, music, weather, computers, movies, books, sports, fashion etc. However, there are better things to do in a train like reading a book, working on puzzles or sleeping. If you believe that chatting helps new acquaintances, you should also remember that you don't even take the phone number while departing. Babbling never develops communication skills. Students should be aware that unnecessary talking acts adversely on memory. Converse with people for some time and continue if it is either interesting or educative. What interests you is again a different matter.

Before you speak out an idea, it should be questioned in three ways: Is it a fact? Is it necessary to say? Is it useful either to the speaker or to the listener?

Never preach or give unsolicited advice. Don't dwell on moral issues however instructive, eloquent and interesting they may be. Relinquish the attitude of teaching your listeners when they don't want it. Even if you have an entirely unselfish desire to reform your listeners, it is prudent to realise whether they like it. Are you sure that your view is always correct to the point?

An experienced physician believes that fasting is harmful leading to acidity as the body clock releases digestive acids on time. But his wife believes in naturopathy and says that fasting helps cleaning the digestive system. "Are you doing this for God or for health?" he asks. She says for both. He starts arguing about gastro-cities, but fails to convince her. He pities her for not understanding the logic. She 'also' pities him for not understanding the benefits of fasting. Their daughter is a nutritionist who believes that it's not good to fast on water alone. She says, "If you want to give your body a period of rest and intense cleansing once in a while, it makes more sense to spend a day eating raw fruits and vegetables, or drinking freshly pressed juices." Both her parents do not listen to her. She feels sorry for them.

Argument:

Argument can be a tonic to conversation, but it must be in good humour. The more you argue the more is the risk of losing *fame*. The best quality of a good argument is to analyse the statement of other person and be sure that you have not omitted any point.

If you concede a point to the other person, he will be inclined to concede a point to you. The purpose of argument is '*agreement*' because agreement promotes harmony. Disagreement breeds antagonism. Be open to other's logic while listening. Don't stand on your rigid convictions. *It is easier to prove someone wrong, than to prove yourself right**. Control your emotions while arguing, leave an opportunity to the opponent to talk and sometimes lose an argument intentionally.

If the other person is more powerful than you, he tries to overpower you with his illogical arguments. Avoid them. Don't follow your guru blindly. Think of the logistics in his preaching. Babas are not Gods. They read more philosophical books than you and practiced preaching. It does not mean they know everything and their word is final. Follow them if you love it, or forget them.

A kid went to a swami along with his mother. While they were leaving the guru blessed, "May God be with you"

The boy asked, "But you said last time, the God is 'in' us."

Swami faltered but quickly recovered and said with a smile, "Yes, he is in you, and that's why he is always with you." Noticing that the boy was not convinced, to strengthen his remarks the baba discoursed, "He leaves you when you don't behave good or do bad."

The boy was in deep thinking. When asked to spell out if he has any further doubt, he asked, "Is God powerful?"

"Yes my son. He is very powerful."

"Is he Kind?" genuinely asked the boy.

"Very kind"

"Then he should either rectify me or punish me. Why should he 'leave' me?"

The art of flattery:

We engaged the services of a new cameraman in the absence of our regular technician. I sincerely complemented him for his excellent work after completion of the ten days schedule.

"Will you hire me next time?" he asked. I was taken aback by his question, but said "I have my regular man."

After a second he queried, "Sorry for enquiring, but who is better?"

Without hesitation I said, "Certainly you are better!"

"I believe that directors like you go for better technician rather than friendship. But I am frustrated and sorry for asking this straight. More than a director, you are a writer and psychoanalyst. Why many of you praise my effort to be brilliant, but don't give me chances?"

I was hesitant but said, "Let me also put it straight. I am not different from those people who long for complements. When you capture a beautiful frame, I always said, 'excellent..!' Haven't I? You are not like that. You are serious, work minded, after shooting you pack up."

"What is wrong with it?" he said bemused.

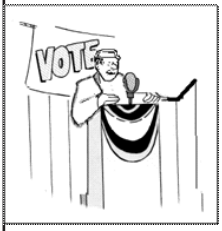
"There is nothing wrong. Great technicians are serious and work minded like you. But you are not that great compated to them. I am revealing this because you asked for it. I would have preferred you if your proficiency is 'far above' than that of my present cameraman. Your work is no doubt superior, but not enough to change my technician who complements me and is friendlier. I do admit that there is a difference between flattery and compliment. I also confess that wise people don't fall for flattery. But during work, these compliments give energy to creative people. I am not ashamed to say that I fell for his flattery during my work. May be this is the weakness of many heroes, directors and producers."

I am not sure how many would accept this theory, but while working together, you should be good at conversation also, unless you are brilliant at your work.

Contrary to popular notion, *flattery is not something to be generally condemned*. Compliments stimulate the self-assertive instinct of the opposite person satisfying his ego. But *soft-soap* must be sincere and should be implied rather than over-expressed. It causes more harm than good when it is insincere or overdone.

The art of communication is not the forte' of sales personnel alone. Good attire, pleasant smile, confident voice, clear modulation and clarity are important. It is not what you say. It is what people hear (and understand) that matters. Look at this side-splitting conversation*.

Secretary : Sir, I have the report about our new ambassador from China.
Minister : Great. Who is he?
Secretary : Hue.
Minister : Who? That's what I want to know.
Secretary : That's the man's name.
Minister : That's whose name?
Secretary : Its Hue's name. Yes sir.
Minister : (Thinking that she is talking about Yasser Arafat) Is Arafat in China? I thought he's dead in the Middle East long ago.
Secretary : That's correct.
Minister : Then who is in China?
Secretary : Yes, sir. Hue is in China.
Minister : Look. I want the name of the new leader of China. But before that, get me the secretary general of the U.N on the phone, Kofi. (Kofi Annan was the UN Secretary General) and also get me some pure milk.
Secretary : Yes, sir. Coffee with pure milk, with or without sugar?
Minister : (Controlling irritation) All right! With milk and sugar!



Self-contradiction is the most adversary phenomena either in conversation or in a public speech. A politician in a recent election campaign said, "The corrupt candidate, who is at present in jail for swindling crores of government funds, would not have been there behind the bars, if he stayed in our party." The statement cost his position in the party, and the ruling party fared miserably in the elections.

Ten rules of sweet talk:

How can some people talk better than others? How do attractive political slogans go into masses? What makes some advertising jingles cut through the clutter of our crowded memories? The answer lies in the way the words are used to influence.

Sweet talk is to ensure that you get your cake and eat it too. Regardless of whether it is with your tight-fisted boss or stubborn girlfriend, sweet talk is definitely worth mastering. There are ten rules.

1. Connect the emotions. Parting with old parents, a boy presents them a mobile and says, "*I am always on your bedside mummy*".

2. Second rule is the 'kiss' principle. **K**eep **I**t **S**traight and **S**imple. 'Garibi hatao' was catchier than 'India shining'. Simplicity counts. Using a complicated word or a long sentence tends to blur its gist. The more plain an idea, the more it is understandable.

3. Words are like sunbeams. They burn deeper when condensed more. As a machine contains no unnecessary parts, a sentence should not contain needless words; a paragraph should not hold unnecessary sentences and a drawing should not have redundant lines.

4. If our words contradict accepted facts or perceptions of others, it worsens our trustworthiness unless we are able to convince them with our logical inferences. Even then, if the opposite person is senseless or irrational, never try to convince with argument that may lead to enmity.

5. Some people go by uncivilised customary use of words. They don't even think to reform their vocabulary. Words are not for sheer communication but for serving a better purpose. Respect is the first principle of a good language. Have you ever noticed that we are evolving with refined language in course of time? 'Physically handicapped' gave way to 'physically challenged' and currently to a better terminology 'differently enabled.' Same way, 'Intellectually hampered' is the replacement for 'mentally retarded'. Is it not more pleasing to see a signboard '*No parking please*' rather than harsh '*Parking here is punishable*'? An affectionate caution, 'Don't drink and drive. Somebody is waiting at home for you' certainly sounds better than 'Drunken driving surly sends you to hell'.

6. Sixth point is credibility. Either it may be your talk or an advertisement, accept the responsibility for actions. Many companies commit this mistake by advertising *'a new and improved'* product every year. It gives an impression that they were giving an inferior product hitherto.

7. This rule contradicts the above. It is offering something 'new'. If you are in business, you should often tell your consumers something novel about your product or sell an innovative idea. Movies with monotony fail at box office for this reason. Customers want change or otherwise move to something else. *We cherish pleasant surprises than predictable routines.*

8. Eighth rule is of sound. A string of words that have the same sound is more effective than a random collection. The rhythm of the language in itself is musical even when there is no tune. If the above seven rules are to be prefixed with headings, they could be: Self-identity, simplicity, brevity, credibility, respectability, consistency and novelty.

9. Ninth rule is 'Sell the dream'. *Look ma… no cavities* is the best example for most successful language. When the advertisement for toothpaste was aired, it was an instant hit since women constitute largest percentage of consumers. Politicians score better than corporate community in this regard, touching the people by speaking to their deepest fears and dreams.

10. You need not always smile while talking, but should compulsorily be pleasant. Don't be serious when the situation doesn't demand. If you are a job aspirant, your pleasant face and stress-free behaviour impresses the interviewer. Seriousness denotes pseudo-philosophical attitude.

Anchors are trained to face the camera with a smiling expression and not to blink the eyes often, not to lag, fumble with dialogues. Forgetting these fundamentals, an anchor reads the news without expression, "Today the Indian team won over Australia by an innings." She suddenly realises it is our nation that has won the match. She recollects what she was taught in the training program about the grin and continues with a broad smile, "Ten people were spot-dead in a blast near the temple."

Gossiping vs. Conversing:

It is your crime to be silent when others expect you to talk. It is a punishment for others if you talk when they don't expect it. In one-on-one conversation there are two subconscious aims: To get to know the other person and to open yourself. It requires Interest in the 'person' and Interest in the 'subject'. Unlike animals we are blessed with the ability to communicate through speech. Are we utilising this gift to the best of our ability? We talk:

1. To avoid boredom.
2. To boast our greatness.
3. To discuss about a person in his absence.
4. To romanticise our past (adding *masala* to normal incidents).
5. To influence others with our pseudo-intellectual discussions.
6. To dominate opposite person in arguments.
7. To exaggerate our miseries and loneliness to gain sympathy.
8. To advise or educate the other person.
9. To acquaint the opposite person by sweet conversation.
10. To enhance mutual wisdom by sharing the knowledge.

Chatting is the work of the tongue, whereas conversing is that of the mind. The first seven constitute gossiping and the next three are conversing (70:30). There is another type: Hurting. You find certain people always egoistic in their conversations, rude and hurt others with their comments. They cover up their discourteous nature by defending, ''Yes! I am very frank. That's why people cannot bear me."

Gossip is different from rumour. The former is an intimate or sensational fact revealed about a person or situation or on spicy personal life, focusing on unverified half-truths. This always begins with a topic that never directly affects the people who are discussing it. A rumor is a testimonial or opinion that may or may not be true. If management is taking an important decision and you are not sure of it, your speculation falls under the rumor umbrella. Rumors should be addressed immediately but gossip however should never be tolerated.

Trusting my memory, it happened in 1985 at Adayar beach, where the hundredth day function of my film "Rakshasudu" was celebrated. The title 'Megastar' was bestowed upon our hero on his birthday and I was one of the speakers.

It was my first public speech. The sounds of bustling sea-waves on my left side and the deafening roar of five thousand audience on the opposite side made me shiver. Sweat ran down my cheeks. I was about to faint. I wanted to say 'Megastar' but ended up saying "Happy birthday to Rakshasudu". There were jeers. That's it. I got down from the stage, my speech longing for just two minutes.

It is not surprising that many people identify 'public speaking' as their major problem. In my seminars I find it easier to make high school students to come to the stage and speak than graduates. Teenagers develop fear of being ridiculed in front of the opposite sex. It happens more often with rural students, particularly when it involves English.

Stage fear:

Every student need not be a great orator, but should develop basic skills of writing and speaking. Many students fail in interviews not because they don't know the subject, but with fear of interview.

I encourage the students to come onto the stage and talk. "How can you fight your fears unless you come here?" I ask. The students say that they don't have the experience. I retort, "There is a 'first' for everything. Would you say the same thing for your marriage?"

Audience never look good, seriously hiding their mischievous smiles, particularly your colleagues. You know that they are ready to 'blow you out' at your smallest hesitation, falter or stammering.

But look at the audience point of view. They have their own agonising reasons. Your speech may be dull, boring and confusing. You do not appear to be having strong convictions about your subject. They are taking the risk with their time and luck. Nevertheless they are enthusiastic. Otherwise they would not have been there. They are ready to either applaud or criticise. The ball is in your court now.

Everyone gets nervous initially. If you are novice, the fear would be so bad that a lump in the throat would physically prevent you from speaking.

But Shhhh..! Keep quite.

Except you, nobody knows about it. If you are sensitive to your weakness, you cannot continue your speech further. Believe that many other great orators also started like you..! John Ruskin said, "There are two types of speakers: those who accept being nervous and those who are liars".

I have told about my experience. I practiced the following steps that helped me to a great extent while speaking in public. I can humbly say, I can now give a nonstop four hours speech on stage.

Nucleus: There are three things to aim at: *1. Dwell into your subject 2. Imbibe the subject into you 3. And finally induce the subject into the hearts of the audience.* You can speak well only if you can deliver the message off your heart. Never be vague. Be equipped with the content beforehand. Many speakers fail due to lack of 'speech construction'. Jot down the points precisely pertaining to the subject matter and develop it mentally. Don't write your speech in the last moment or at the venue, particularly if you are a beginner. Command over the subject boosts your self-confidence, shows up in your tone, augments your body-language and gets authority over your gestures.

Self-therapy: Deliver the speech in front of a mirror or a group of friends. This gives you an idea about your style of standing, facial expressions and the way you present yourself..! Your hand movement should show how you feel. When you broaden your hands and utter words like "the entire world… the earth and the sky…our national flag on Mount Everest..." your gestures impress the audience.

Recall: Some people suggest that the speaker should relax before the talk. No. Anxiety 'does' exist even for an experienced orator, of course with enthusiastic excitement. His nervousness may be just for a moment, but presence of anxiety is for sure. For a beginner anxiety is a major cause of worry resulting in quick heartbeats and perspiration. *While waiting for your turn, involve in a short and secret meditation.* Keep rehearsing to yourself. Suddenly you start listening to your inner voice. With all these preparations, you are now ready to go onto the dais.

Walking onto the dais: Take deep breath, rise slowly, walk normally but not casually or lazily, and get on to the dais confidently. Glance at the audience once, be silent for few seconds (and not more than that) and start your speech with a beaming face. Give a smooth salutation and begin slowly. If you are a beginner, hold your hands tight in front of you, or keep them in your pockets or on the podium, to avoid nervousness and leave them free once you feel at ease. Let your mental awareness guide you while speaking and soon you would find your energies welling up inside you. Within few seconds, you will be in command and then go full swing.

Confidence: Take a quick look at the audience from right to left and from front to back to get over your nervousness. They came to listen, resting their confidence in you. As you raise your head to initiate your speech, you find all the faces looking at you with great expectations (and some of your friends smiling encouragingly). You are the leader of the situation but the job is new. It certainly instigates a wave of nervousness and there is no other choice but to continue..! Find the eager and enthusiastic faces. *Get confidence by often looking at them.* One final caution..! Be attentive that you cannot fake the audience. Your topic should certainly be relevant, true and authentic.

Initiating the speech: Take a deep breath as you stand in front of the mike… and smile..! The smile gives you a feeling of comfort and the audience cherish your confidence. It acts like a bond between you and the audience. Don't start the speech straightaway. If you begin your speech instantly, *you get ahead of your thoughts* and end up losing control, leading to a total catastrophe. Take few moments to get your body and mind adjusted. Let your B.P. come to normal. Let the audience also wait with expectation. But never prolong your silence for more than few seconds testing their patience. Some speakers start addressing all the members on the dais, each by name and their designation, taxing the tolerance of the audience. Unless protocol requires, you need not introduce all of them, as audience already know who they are.

Spacing: Never talk too fast. Know where to pause to give the audience time to smile or applaud. If you select a joke, it should be brief and to the point with a definite punch line at the end. After a joke or a quote, wait for a second. Audience would know that you waited for their claps. They would encourage you by their applause.

Expression: Be sad while talking about someone's loss or misfortune. Grin while talking about victory. Be furious while condemning corruption. Thus relate your expressions with the subject that you are talking about.

The grip: The main technique is how you open up your speech. *Never start with an apology.* Begin with an emotional statement, quotation or humorous joke such as, "Behind every successful person there is a woman… and behind the woman is his wife..!" If you are speaking on a quit-smoking day, a shocking revelation like "In next two decades, fifty per cent of our population is going to die either from lung cancer or respiratory ailments...! Yes. I am talking about our smoking habits..." may be appropriate. Take the audience into your grip. How quickly you seize the interest of the listeners is important. The speaker starts: "*In twenty years of our married life, one day my wife wanted me to take another woman for a dinner. I was surprised. But she insisted. She said she loves me, but the other woman also loves to spend time with me. It was 'mother's day' and the woman my wife was referring to was 'my mother', who has been a widow for 19 years. It was unfortunate that I don't visit her often due to the demands of my work…"* the speaker stops for a while and by that time the entire auditorium is silent, enthusiastic and emotional.

Key noting: Don't memorise the speech or read out the papers. Just note down key points. Spontaneous oration sounds better than the prepared one. It is always better to tape and listen to your speech for first two or three occasions, so that you will get to know the unwanted long pauses, monotones etc.

Punctuations: Be careful with construction of sentences. A misunderstanding arises even if the punctuations are not proper. If you want to say, 'Woman, without her… man is nothing' but end up saying, 'woman without her man… is nothing', it gives quite contradictory meaning. If you say, "Ravana abducted Sita and killed by Rama", audience may understand it as Ravana got Sita killed by Rama.

Time factor: Ramayana can be told in three words or for three days. Talk in the stipulated time given to you. It is always good to prepare more and speak less. Make it simple and sweet. If you cannot deliver it in one sentence, you can never do it in one hour. Prepare the notes taking time into consideration. Many speakers fail in this aspect.

Hitam and Priyam: Discriminate between the *useful* and the *tasteful speech*. 'Hitam' includes preaching of values, morals, personality development tips, facts and statistics. 'Priyam' is the talk with jokes, light-hearted stories and funny experiences that entertain the listeners. The success of a speech depends on the combination of both. The presenter should know either to be serious or humorous, depending on the purpose of his speech and the mood of the audience. If you are delivering a speech at a business school, you should follow more of *Hitam* and you should prefer more *Priyam* to the kids at kindergarten school.

Dynamism: Add some dynamism while you address. It is called 'Verbal I.Q' There are certain winning words like, 'Let's talk on this subject in detail when we revert back to, and now go over to most important aspect of my topic…' These are the phrases that tranquillise the listeners. Phrases such as, *'I guess' 'I am not sure…'* and *'you may not understand what I am talking but…'* need to be avoided.

Caution: While delivering a lecture on 'love marriage – love after marriage', I was narrating the repercussions of present day 'contract marriages'. Quoting a real incident where a boy cheated the girl, unintentionally I mentioned the caste of the boy. A legal notice was waiting for me before I reached home. Be careful what you want to convey and how it reaches the audience. We often read in newspapers about the politicians contradicting the paper statements saying that what they told in press conference (or in their speech) is different.

> *Public speaking is an art, but not an impossible task. Just practice. Remember your first swimming practice. You wanted to step into the water but was afraid… still you practiced… then slowly you enjoyed the marvellous feeling of the passing air and cool water… a feeling of conquering the world..!*

You will have the same feeling once the initial barriers are broken, maybe after three or four orations. Most important part is 'breaking the ice'. I told you already about my first disgraceful experience. The above precautions took me a long way to develop. Follow the tips and you will be walking on cloud nine after the speech.

Vocabulary is something that others will notice as a sign of your skilful communication. It includes speaking, listening and writing. We have already discussed about private and public talk. Let us now go with the other two.

LISTENING:

When you speak you are a lawyer, and when you listen you are a judge. Listening is a more complicated art. The person who is talking should know that he is being listened to. Bending, looking into the eyes of the speaker and nodding the head show your involvement.

In any conversation spend half your time in listening, unless the other person wishes you to talk more. The advantages of silent listening are: You conceal your own weakness, learn the other person's attitude, you give the other person pleasure of talking. In times of trouble, a sympathetic ear is more appreciated than your talking.

While listening look into other person's eyes for 50% of the time, and while talking 70%. If you look constantly, the opposite person may feel that you are probing the genuineness of the conversation. If you don't look into other's eyes, it denotes your guilt or fear complex. Of course, these rules don't apply to lovers.

WRITING:

Writing skills are different from speaking. Here is a letter by an employee applying for leave: *'Please grant me two-day leave as I have to go to my native village to sell my ancestral land along with my wife.'* To develop writing skills begin penning the story of a latest movie in twenty sentences. Read it again after two days. You'll find it not up to your satisfaction. Re-write it. You would be amazed to find your style improving. Then read it out to your friends. You find some more corrections while reading aloud.

Develop answering skills. Try to answer these question in one simple sentence: How do refrigerators work, bulbs light up, batteries act upon, eyeglasses perform, airplanes fly? Why do we breathe? What makes the seasons? Why is the ice slippery? Why do we get sick? What is plastic? Answers should be in single sentence.

You find it hard in answering in one sentence, though you know it in detail. But try. Brevity is an art. Sometimes you may have to repeat what you said, to inject your idea into audience. Whether to repeat or to be precise depends on the I.Q of your audience.

Group discussion:

Speaking on stage is different from group discussions. If you are a student, let each friend talk for five minutes on topics like: 'Whose human body, either living or non-living personality do you choose if you were given an option to stay in it for a day, *and why*? What do you do if an inevitable meteor crash is to take place in another five days to destroy the entire mankind?

The topics can be funny, but make your talk intelligent and interesting. What would have been the present society if there were no male and female category but all of us were unisex like earthworms? Answer (example): Hero dances with same sex, thus the duets in the films would be most boring; evening parks lose their charm, no need for reservations for the fairer sex in professional courses and in parliament.

Think of various alternatives while discussing. You don't find better solutions if you satisfy with the first answer that comes to your mind. Think of how many names your parents would have considered before selecting the best for you. Would you have been happy to be called by the very first name that came to your parent's thoughts?

Once you understand the technique of group discussion and answering in interviews, presenting your point becomes an art. Have a clearly defined theme first to present your point. *Add flavour to it.* Arrange the facts and ideas in an effective and systematic form. Make it simple and at the end summarise the whole topic. There are ways to offer effective comment or criticism.

1. Know the need to comment.
2. If at all you want to criticise, choose the right place and time.
3. Weigh the consequences before you comment.
4. Substantiate your statement with positive and negative examples.
5. Give explanations rather than excuses.
6. Compromise voluntarily if necessary.
7. Accept or reject other's ideas on understandable grounds.
8. Never talk unless you are sure of it.
9. Know when to withdraw from the argument.
10. Know that when two people are arguing over two opposing principles, both are right.

When you want to comment in a group discussion, don't do it under a veil; stand up and put forth your comment. You can freely differ with someone's opinion but use your criticism sparingly. Criticise only if there is a need, not just because you got a point to criticise.

Suppose in a group discussion a speaker says: "The husband told his wife, 'Your brother is not coming for dinner tonight. He called me from Delhi and apologised for not coming.' The wife said, 'My brother is coming to dinner tonight. He told me by phone and confirmed it.'

The speaker concludes, "Both the husband and wife are right..."

Don't immediately stand up getting irritated. Your speaker may be right, if the wife and husband are referring to two different brothers or the husband uttered those words at 11.59 p.m. and the wife at 12.01 a.m.

•••

We are at the end part of the chapter 'fame'. Fame can be with enphoria or reverence. People clap, whistle and dance in front of a 'star' and bend with respect before an 'actor'. That is the difference. Fame and money are two aiswaryas (out of six) that you don't require if you can manage to live in a forest. They add to life for more satisfaction and comfort respectively.

Love your servant, beggar and the orphan
They tell you how fortunate you are.
Respect your father for tilling the soil;
your mother for her love and the toil.
Bow before your teacher
He made your target clear
Respect the moon sun and the star,
But for them you are not here.

MONEY TO THE POWER OF MONEY

POOR PEOPLE SPEND TIME
TO SAVE MONEY.
THE RICH SPEND MONEY
TO SAVE TIME.

Suppose you do dishes for one hour daily. If you can increase *your time value* to hundred rupees per hour and get a person for the job for thirty, you gain seventy rupees per each hour by delegating the work. A stage would come, where you would be an *executive,* entrusting all the jobs to others. The more you enhance your time-price, the more you have free time to think, involve in more productive work and enhance your earnings. All your bank transactions, secretarial work, small shopping and even cooking will be done by others for a rate which is *much cheaper* than *'your rate'*. This is the analysis of above quote.

There is much in life between *settling*, *retiring* and *beyond retiring*. It is 'continuous desire'. Wayne Dyer said, "I asked the executives in a motivational speech to write down the list of their desires. Surprisingly many were unable to pen at least one. Someone said, 'I want to be happy'. Unfortunately he did not understand that it was exactly my question!''

We have enormous inner strength, but we neither recognise nor utilise it, as we are not sure of what you get in return. The below example confirms it.

If you are asked to hold a one-rupee coin on your head and stand in the hot sun, after a few minutes you feel tired (or bored). If you are offered a rupee for each extra minute, you take it for about ten more minutes! Then you will weigh between earning money and the pain of standing. You withdraw if you feel that standing in the hot sun for meagre ten rupees is worthless.

Now if you are offered ten thousand rupees for each extra minute, you stand for some more time. When you are about to become unconscious, suppose a million on each extra second is offered, surely you gather stamina from all corners of your body to stay, surprisingly beyond your imaginary limited capacities. And that is Mind power.

(W)Healthy dream:

While addressing engineering students in a remote northern part of the state, I asked them to write on a piece of paper, how many bedrooms they wish to have when they own a house at the age of forty.

Around ten per cent wrote one bedroom, half of them two and twenty per cent made it three rooms. I enquired the students who preferred a two-bedroom dwelling, why can't they adjust with single bedroom? They instantly said it would be clumsy, narrow and without privacy. I alleged, "If that is the case, don't you think your two grown-up children also would desire to have their privacy?"

They did not answer. Breaking their silence my next question was, "Where do you want your parents to sleep?" They were taken aback. A mischievous boy from rear pranked, 'Hall'. Motivators are susceptible to such retorts and are always ready with quick rejoinders. "If you make your old age parents sleep in a hall, your children will ask you to sleep in toilets" I hit back. There was instantaneous and thunderous applause.

Heading to my next query I asked, "How do you want to take care of your sick elders, in general hospital or corporate one?"

The answer was prompt. Then I told them, "You are all future engineers. Dreaming just two-room apartment is a middle class morality. Instead of two rooms, why don't you dream five rooms? It is just a dream. Our former president encouraged us to dream high and try to make it true. Visualise a swimming pool in the middle of your house and fancy even a helipad. Or if you think of living in a single room and spend all your earnings in a philanthropic way, it is a different matter."

This time when you feel bored, close your eyes and dream. Give your dreams all you've got and you'll be amazed to discover your concealed energy. You may fail once. Give another try. You would certainly succeed. Only secret is to know where to 'invest' your energies.

A clerk has two alternatives after coming from the office, either to relax watching TV or to engage in a part time job. People who underestimate their management capacities have simple answer: 'I don't know… I can't think'. They can be happier and wealthier if they can enrich their '*time-cost*'. Proving this theory correct, here is a *true* story.

A clerk resided at the outskirts of a city. His journey to office took a minimum of two hours. His two children were going to school in a rickshaw. The school was also in the main city near his office. He later purchased a vehicle and saved the rickshaw expenditure by dropping his children. But the timing of the school and his office were 8 and10 a.m. respectively.

Instead of traveling back home, he took a room near the school and started tuitions for one hour. Soon he became popular with his teaching skills (unknown to him till then). He extended it in the evening. He soon found that his 'one hour a day' coaching revenue was equal to 'eight hours a day' salary. He resigned his job and established a coaching institute along with his wife. Now he is the chairman of a group of leading educational institutions.

On an average we live for 840 months and start planning our future from the age of 20. We spend half the time in eating, sleeping etc. Our average working period is 18000 days and productive time per day is 9 hours. If you wake up one hour earlier, you are increasing your time by approximately *2000 days (at present productive level).* Prepare a chart with each column representing an activity such as going to the washroom, travelling, reading, watching TV and movies, talking with friends, browsing Internet etc. You will have a clear view by the end of the week. You can evaluate the return on 'time expenditures' such as:

- The quality of the people you spent time with,
- The value that you received from those activities
- Time spent on entertainment and gossiping
- Acquiring knowledge.
- Earning money and fame

Now you have a clear view of how 'far' you are from your targets. Self-actualisation means asking questions:

- Did this activity take me closer to my objectives?
- What better alternative can I substitute for this time block?'
- Is this person with whom I am spending long hours a looser or a winner?

At the end you will know the 'Add' and 'Delete' buttons of the Time computer of your Life.

WAITING FOR UTOPIA

Are you expecting the society to change?

Since ages writers economists and few philosophers are optimistic about symmetries of society. They believe that with a revolutionary change, everybody will have *equal opportunities* and *financial equality;* there would be no gap between the rich and poor, the corrupt are punished and only the hard working people are rewarded. Nevertheless, nothing much has changed and the society continues to be the same.

Let it be any society; intellectuals, skilled workers, investors, inventors and scholars expect more rewards than ordinary people. Hence the imbalance continues to exist. Of course, rouges, corrupt bureaucrats, mafia and fit-for-nothing politicians also fall in the elite rich group but that is not the matter of our discussion. We have something more than it to debate.

Successful people without waiting for the system to change to uplift them, *transform themselves to fit into the prevailing system.* This is the essence of this chapter. This fictitious story, based on pure economics is amusing and funny, but the undercurrent is something worth thinking.

This book is set on the foundation 'I am important to me'. In this era of economic change and globalisation, success at *personal level* is of paramount importance. Rest (society, relationships, love, philanthropy and even family) takes second priority. Unless you are financially successful, how can you be of some help to others or the society? *People who do not like this theory may skip reading this chapter further.*

…

It was time for the cattle to return home.

The dark shadows were creeping up on the red sky.

He stood there on the hilltop, took his last deep-breath, closed his eyes, prayed God for the last time and was about to jump.

A voice called from behind "…..Subbarao".

Shocked, he turned back.

An old saint with long white beard was standing behind him. "….Why do you want to commit suicide dear?"

Sighing in despair Subbarao replied "Swami, this routine question had never changed since ages. If I tell the reason why I am dying, you start preaching– 'A*re you committing suicide for such a small reason? God gave us this life not to end in such a manner...blab...blab*"

"I won't stop you. Just tell me the reason! I am just curious."

"I am a common middle class man leading a simple life. I don't hurt anybody. I don't have ambitious desires, but still my life has become miserable. My complaint is not personal but related to the society..!! I am fed up." Subbarao shattered emotionally, with tears in his eyes.

"Your decision to commit suicide must have evolved from middle class mental agonies and common-man syndromes."

"Don't heckle me with words like *middle class* and *common man*. I am proud to be a common man. I am poor because I don't want to cheat others, bribe the government officials, earn by corrupt means and live by unethical standards."

"Okay. Why did you then buy a railway berth by bribing the T.C few days ago? The berth certainly belonged to someone else."

Subbarao was shocked, "How did you know about that?"

"Forget it. Answer me."

"Sometimes it becomes inevitable."

"I did not get it. You said you have no big desires, but you wanted a sleeper berth. You don't want to cheat others but deceived a wait-list passenger…!" the old man took a deep breath and continued, "I think the fault lies with you. You cover up the cause of your failure as your integrity. You stay poor because you can't become rich and you mask your inability as sincerity."

"No. One has to be corrupt, accept kickbacks and cheat others. The fault is with the society. The deceitful politicians and unethical businessmen are escaping from the law. Dishonest officials have properties in the outskirts of the cities. Black marketers, mafia leaders, land grabbers, thieves and robbers are scot-free. Sharks are enjoying the benefit while the average middle-class is working hard."

"Then what is the remedy?"

Subbarao almost yelled, "The corrupt politicians, bureaucrats, police, judges and business people should be unpolluted or be hanged. Country is to be reformed to make poor people like me live happily. If only God gives me the power, I will make common man's life comfortable. I will provide everybody the right to live happily. I will reduce the gap between the rich and poor; workers and the employer. I will change everything."

"Ok then! I am God!! And I bestow you with such powers!!! Go ahead… Change the world" the old man disappeared to the astonishment of Subbarao.

…

The old man appeared again at midnight, "I am God. Don't you believe me even after seeing me vanish before your eyes?"

"Please go away. I am dreaming my utopian world. Don't disturb my sleep."

"I will leave if you want. But stop speaking nonsense about my creation and the natural justice."

"What is *natural* justice?"

"I created the deer for the lion and grass for the deer. How can the deer and the grass complain about that?"

Subbarao said sarcastically, "Yes. The same way you created wealthy to eat the common man under the pretext of natural... err… justice."

The old man was taken aback, "You seem to be a wise" he praised, "but wise people are never pessimistic. There must be some flaw in your thinking".

"I am very truthful to the society. That is the flaw" he murmured.

"So, do you imagine a society free from cheating and robbery where hard work is duly rewarded?"

"Certainly yes"

Then a voice resonated in the room, "***So shall it be henceforth...!*** Anything you do for your country from now onwards will be the final say. Nobody would dare to oppose it..! Any punishment you impose on the offenders will be executed in seconds..! You are not answerable to anyone. Go and liberate the country in your own way. Go ahead…"

Subbarao looked around.

"What are you looking for?"

"To keep a flower in my ear..!"

"You stupid..! I am the God! Lord Brahma..!! Husband of Saraswathi… Son of Vishnu..!" Saying so, the old man waved his hand in the air, "See. Here is the sacred ash"

Subbarao laughed. "Our Babas effortlessly can exhibit these tricks."

"Then it's your fate…" said the old man irately. "Now I understand why you continue to be a cynic. You have no faith. No courage. No confidence. The most important character of being Number One is 'challenge' and that is lacking in you."

The old man vanished.

…

Concluding the press conference Subbarao said, "The purpose of inviting you has been clearly explained. Please ask if you want any further clarifications."

One of the correspondents stood up, "Do you have any objection if we highlight you as the joker of this decade?"

The hall burst out with laughter. Subbarao said, "I have no objection even if you make me the joker of the millennium, provided you publish the matter in your papers."

"… You believe that you will change this country..! And you want us to publish the same in newspapers! And as a proof, you are going to walk on the waters of the Tank Bund tomorrow morning!! You want people to gather there to watch your feat!"

"Yes"

"Suppose people find it bogus, won't they blast us? Who will take responsibility for that?"

Subbarao stared at them. Clearing his throat, he spoke "…. Listen! You all came here with excitement when I announced that I am going to give some astounding news. You did not even bother about the caller. When I am revealing this mind-blowing news, you are heckling me. I do not mind even. Please eat your snacks and publish the news."

As the reporters were getting up from their seats, Subbarao spoke slowly but firmly, “By the time you reach home, you will all get slight stomach ache. It won’t abate till you write this news. If you don’t believe even after it, you would be paralysed. So don’t hurt yourself unnecessarily.”

...

Tank Bund.

He did not expect such a huge gathering. Every paper published the news prominently on the front page. The stomach-ache must have worked. Nobody ventured a paralytic stroke. The news spread like wild fire.

Subbarao was dumbfounded seeing the crowd. ‘These people came all the way early in the morning just to watch someone walking on the water without bothering to verify the practicability of the feat. How unfortunate my country is to have people with such a poor time sense.’

As the crowd noticed his arrival, few waved their hands and some of them booed “Clown... Joker!”, but many of them were silent and curious. Subbarao stepped forward. As the masses were watching, he went down the steps of the tank bund, kept his foot on water and walked two steps forward. He did not drown.

Suddenly the entire atmosphere became still..! People forgot to breathe. The astounding silence swapped over the place for few seconds and slowly turned into waves of claps, cheers and applause. One fellow raised his hands into the air and exclaimed, “Harahara Mahadev”. Many joined him. The chanting echoed. Few of them wept with excitement.

He walked four steps further. The crowds were still applauding. He went to the temple in the middle of the lake and returned. The uproar was uncontrollable. People rushed to touch his feet and the TV crew were busy capturing the eighth wonder. One reporter questioned, “What is your next programme? Giving spiritual discourses? Healing the sick? Establishing a new religion?”

“No. Nothing”

“Then..?”

“The Presidents of India and Pakistan are coming to meet me tomorrow. I’ll discuss about the Kashmir issue with them.”

Next day.

"What made you leave Islamabad in haste and come here straight away?" the TV reporter questioned.

"Sixth sense" replied the Pakistan President "…we are always ready for a noble cause" he paused. But it was not true.

The Pakistan President received a phone call from Subbarao. He did not understand how a call from India could reach him without the knowledge of his secretary. Subbarao spoke very briefly, "There will be four punishments" he stopped for a while. "…Unless you do what I say. First you will get stomach-ache. An hour later, your grandchildren would disappear. One hour later you will have a stroke of paralysis and will be bed ridden permanently."

The president initially thought it was the joke of his life. But after one hour the symptoms were showing up, first the stomach pain, then disappearance of his grand-daughter, and finally signs of paralysis..!

He trembled with fear. He called for the ISI. The Secret Service Chief and the advisers vehemently opposed the President going to India for talks. They all had severe stroke of stomach pain within few seconds. They were compelled to believe the unbelievable. The President gave immediate orders to arrange for his travel. Next minute his granddaughter came running from the garden.

…

The presidents of India and Pakistan were having tea in Subbarao's house the next morning. He first spoke to the Indian President "You know that the fault lies with our country over the Kashmir issue. We have accepted the mediation of U.N. in 1947 but went back on our word."

Saying so, he turned to the Pakistan's president, "….you also very well know that unless you satisfy your religion-conscious people, you cannot survive as President."

Neither of them replied. Subbarao said flaccidly, "One lakh twenty five thousand soldiers lost their lives on both the sides during the last one decade. Around seventy thousand innocent Kashmiris were killed in firing. Countless people were injured. Why… why is this happening?" Nobody answered. There was pin-drop silence.

"I want to stop this massacre" Subbarao declared in a stern voice. "I am giving you five minutes. Go to the next room and return with a permanent solution for this. Any Indian or Pakistani who objects your decision will be taken care of".

Both Presidents looked at each other. Unable to bear the hostility, a security guard of the Pakistan yelled "… Who the hell are you to dictate terms to my country… you bloody Indian…" shouting so, he aimed his weapon at Subbarao and was about to open fire. Then the miracle happened. The guard jolted as if he was holding a live current wire, threw the rifle and collapsed to the ground unconscious.

"Oh my God" murmured Subbarao. A voice from behind responded "Did you call me?" Surprised he turned his head. The old man was standing behind him. "Why are you here?" Subbarao whispered.

"You said, 'My God'. I thought you called me" replied the old man.

"Sorry. I can handle the situation" said Subbarao and turned around.

An uncomfortable stillness banqueted the area. The viewers were still unable to believe. Both the presidents went inside. Subbarao spoke to the reporters. "Make this announcement. Let all know that there will be no terrorism in this world. All the ministers, chief ministers, politicians are therefore safe from the threats. Hence their security is withdrawn with immediate effect."

"What if someone attacks them…?" one reporter questioned.

"No one will" replied Subbarao sternly. "… Even if a single such incident takes place, I will withdraw my orders. Here is another declaration. From today no political party will organise any activity that causes hindrance to the public. Roadblocks, rasta-rokos, bandhs and hartals shall cease to exist. Commemorations of martyrs in the middle of the roads are forbidden. Any religious construction that obstructs the traffic will be demolished."

"People will not tolerate"

Subbarao laughed, "They will. People in general are good and peace loving. Some individuals provoke the innocent to meet their selfish ends. But that is the past. From now, anybody who turns against these civic rights would be suffering with the four punishments."

Meanwhile both the presidents came out, "We did not find a solution for the Kashmir issue. That's why we came out with a decision instead" they said.

"What's it?"

"We are merging India and Pakistan as a single nation."

"Good……" said Subbarao. "But people of both countries, particularly Pakistan should accept this decision wholeheartedly! We cannot always force them by threatening."

"We have a solution for that. Pakistan will attack India and occupy the whole country from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. India will not object for that"

Subbarao was shocked "What are you talking? I don't agree."

The President smiled "Let me complete. After they occupy, elections will be held. Undoubtedly Congress and BJP will get two-thirds majority defeating the Awami league and other Pakistani parties. Then the capital will be shifted from Islamabad to Delhi or Amritsar." he completed.

"Now I understand how you were politicians" said Subbarao and turned towards the journalists but found nobody. They have already gone to print the sensational news that the Kashmir issue was solved.

…

"I liked you for your ethical values" said Brahma appearing again in his dream, "You did not utilise the powers for your selfish needs. If you desired, you would have easily become a dictator. You are great…"

Subbarao interrupted "… Truly speaking, the Kashmir issue was not the big problem Brahma deva..! There are other major problems."

The God wanted to say something, but vanished changing his mind. Next morning Subbarao announced, "Henceforth, whoever takes bribe will get stomach-ache followed by remaining punishments if he or she continues. The person, who submits wrong statements to income tax, hoards essential goods, evades commercial and property taxes, takes illegal electricity connections, and buys properties with black money would face the punishments instantly. As God Himself is the witness, there is no necessity for any appeal."

He further continued, "All those business people who have evaded the taxes in the last ten years should reimburse the amount to the government within ten days with interest. Politicians, business people, I.A.S. officers, engineers, contractors whoever have acquired wealth by corrupt means, should handover seventy five per cent of such assets..."

The news spread across the country within seconds. Ten days later Subbarao received a phone call from the Prime Minister. "Congrats. Entire foreign loans of India are cleared. Do you know how much money was recovered? Ten million Thousand..!"

Subbarao was stunned. "Oh..!" he exclaimed.

"Those who were not willing to part with their illegitimate money or pay penalty died. But they were only about hundred in number."

"Love for life is greater than love for money" smiled Subbarao and cradled the phone.

...

It was five in the evening.

He came onto the road. There were no traffic jams. No vehicle or even a single cycle was seen parked in the 'no parking' zone. No abrupt right-turns; no sudden entries from small lanes, no reckless and overload driving. A vehicle driver tried to cross the red signal but immediately went back due to devastating stomach pain.

Railway canteens served good food as they need not pay kick-backs. Road tops were excellent and contractors were honest. Above all there were no 'hangers' or 'cronies' following the politicians.

There were no fist-fights in the assemblies and parliament. Politicians became dignified. Anyone trying to break or throw the mike, instantly curled with pain. Employees were prompt to the offices, came out only during the lunchtime and gossiping reduced. People stopped using official vehicles for private works and picnics.

Court cases were considerably reduced. Criminals were confessing their crimes without any protest. In fact there were no crimes. The moment a *criminal thought* arose, the pain sneaked as a warning sign. Ignoring it, if they continued to execute, the second punishment was waiting in the queue.

Meanwhile, there were several murder attempts on Subbarao, but no sooner a person tried to assault him, collapsed.

There were no encounters in the forests. From Kerala to Kashmir, Kanyakumari to Lahore everything remained peaceful. Women were able to walk alone in the midnight. No recommendations in interviews and promotions were purely on merit and experience. Commodities, gas, electricity, water – everything was available abundantly. The social change was impressive and commendable..!

But these reforms had a darker side also. As soon as Subbarao declared that fraudulent officers should return 3/4th of their illegal property, the prices of real estates, gold and vehicles crashed. As the order was to deposit the money within ten days, no buyers with liquid cash were available. Moreover, dishonest officials who relaxed till the 'tenth day' (thinking that a small preys like them could not be identified) were rushed to the hospital. They had to sell the property on the eleventh day for whatever amount it fetched.

Even Subbarao got stomach-ache. He recollected that it was a cash gift of 1,116 that he accepted for doing an official favour. He didn't regret, as to err is human. He returned back the 'total' amount.

...

The whole world was watching his reforms with excitement and enthusiasm. He was the living God. Uncontrollable public thronged his house to have a glimpse. But he did not change his life style. He was staying with his wife and kids in the same small dwelling in a narrow lane.

There were other surprising changes. The star hotels lost their business and were almost empty. Their major customers were always business people, liquor mafia, real estate owners and political brokers, who were hitherto spending their black money lavishly. They ceased staying there. The money spinning channels of corrupt secretariat, revenue, transport and tax officials were blocked and hence there were no customers for costly bars and restaurants.

The tourism business was also in doldrums due to the same reason. The politicians could not visit foreign countries on tiny pretexts and the airline companies were on the verge of closure. The banking business pressed the panic button as there was no black money.

On a rainy evening, the Prime Minister from Delhi rushed down to meet Subbarao. He was pale, "We are in deep trouble."

"Regarding what?"

"Idleness and unemployment…" he said. "…As there is no fear of terrorists, militants, intruders, mafia and smugglers, we withdrew the BSF and other army services from frontiers. At micro level, the traffic police, body guards of politicians, C.B.I and anti-corruption officials are without work. Officers of income tax, commercial taxes, registrars, lawyers, judges, CBI officers – everybody are idle and inactive."

"What about the political leaders, their hangers and the political brokers" questioned Subbarao.

"Generally, leaders never tolerate political silence. Under normal conditions, they would have created disturbance by raising some petty issue. But now, the moment they think of any such act, their belly-cramps aggrieved." smiled the Prime Minister. "…but the main problem is something different. Do you know the number of officials in various categories, who are out of work due to these reforms?"

"How many?"

"Lawyers, police, military and many other employees… all included... are nearly two hundred and fifty million!"

Subbarao's heart skipped a beat. "Two fifty million?" his throat parched "…one fourth of our population! Half of our youth..!"

"Yes. There is no work for half of the secretariat personnel. *The work which took them an entire day earlier is now being finished in just an hour.* Canteens in government offices were closed. Contractors are laying the roads properly. Hence no supervisors needed. No need for checking inspectors in trains, buses and flights since no ticket-less travellers, and I am at the end of my wits."

"Instruct all of them to dig canals" Subbarao replied thoughtfully.

"…What?" screamed the Prime minister.

"Yes. A flood in Bihar, droughts in Aliabad and famine in Karachi… the reason for theses calamities is lack of proper links between the rivers."

P.M looked at Subbarao with bewilderment and shock. Unmindful of him, he continued. "…Let them dig canals between Godavari to Brahmaputra; Indus and Krishna; between Ganga and Kaveri!! The man power shouldn't be left unutilised! With this, there will be no draughts and no floods. More than that, the transportation of goods would be very cheap. We can use boats rather than Lorries and save petrol."

The proposal was straightaway appreciated by the Prime Minister. After his departure, Subbarao sat down thinking.

W*hat about people who are enjoying with the income from their ancestral property? Without any work why should they just sit, play cards in the clubs, have fun in the pubs, with the income from the lands, house and other properties?*

Another declaration came from him the next day. "The tiller of the land is the owner". He even thought of declaring "Tenant is the owner of the house", but withdrew recalling that a part of his house also was given on rent.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister implemented the developmental activities. The farmers and labour were working happily, but the white collar people were uncomfortable as they were not used to heat, rain and sweating. But nobody complained.

The streets were clean, thanks to municipal department; roads were without pits, thanks to contractors; no power failures, thanks to abundant resources. Above all, people were happy as stupid debates, senseless discussions and silly sensational news items have disappeared from the TV channels.

The canals were filled with water within few months. There were no floods. From Tharamangalam to Thar Desert, all places turned lush green. The yield was ten times more..! It was hailed as another green revolution never known in world history, but it surprisingly resulted in a shocking disaster.

The product was abundant but there were no takers, resulting in a steep fall of the prices. A bag of rice hitherto costing hundred rupees came down to ten rupees.

…

"With such a fall in prices, the poor are happy. Aren't they?" asked Subbarao. The economic advisor to the prime minister said "No..! Farmers are ready to burn away the product. It costs fifteen rupees for fertilizers, ten rupees for pesticides, twenty for other incidental expenses to grow a bag of rice, whereas they are getting a meagre ten rupees in return. They have no other option but to commit suicide"

After a deep thought, Subbarao pronounced, "...Ask the Government to buy the entire product at a price that is profitable to the farmers".

The advisor could not refuse. The policy was implemented immediately. The farmers were very happy.

The warehouses of Food Corporation of India were full with million tonnes of food grains far exceeding the demand. But the hunger deaths continued. The Human Rights commission approached the Supreme Court to implement '*Right to live*' provided in the Constitution. The Supreme Court responded with a direction to the government to either distribute the stocks to the poor for free, or release it to the open market. The price further crashed.

Six months later, Indian Government declared bankrupt.

...

"How did this happen?" screamed Subbarao.

Some of the highest officials and experts were present but nobody spoke. He continued, "There were thousand millions of rupees being deposited with us by the black marketers, industrialists and officials..!"

"The entire amount was spent for digging the canals and for paying '*subsidies'* to the farmers" answered one officer.

Subbarao snapped, "Everybody is now paying taxes honestly. Why is this money crunch?"

"They are paying taxes perfectly as per their income. But the fact is that their incomes have drastically come down"

"Why?"

There was silence. Nobody answered his question. At this moment a foreigner entered the hall. Only few could identify him, very few.

"I came on behalf of corporate sector companies to convey an important decision. They are closing down their companies from tomorrow. The big industrialists may follow the suit in a few days."

There was a wave of shock. "Why… what for?" asked Subbarao.

"The answer is simple. A person earning 50 million used to *hide* forty million as black money; and pay four millions tax. Now he has to shell down around 38 million on his earnings. He feels he need not work hard to earn such a meagre income. He curtailed his business. Consequently the Government revenue has also dropped."

Everybody nodded in agreement.

"…Coming to your second question, the employees are accustomed to travel in flights and lead lavish five star hotel comforts. At the same time they also work hard" he paused for a while, "These people have now lost those additional benefits and perks. The organisations cannot afford to pay for their luxurious comforts. They were demoralised and their efficiency had come down drastically."

"We can reduce the percentage of taxes" Subbarao said desperately.

"It is not the question of taxes or percentages. There is no money in circulation. The more the money circulates, the more is the prosperity. The purchasing power of the people came down abnormally. The shopping malls, star hotels and the jewellery shops are facing closure."

"Then where did all the money go?"

"*To the common man*" replied the economist, "The middle class was benefited. Lower classes are getting abundant food."

"This is exactly what I wanted" Subbarao cheerfully said.

"But this is temporary…" said the person in the suit. "The poor are not working to their full capacity, as it is enough for them to work to earn ten rupees a day. We are providing them everything on subsidy and the commodities are cheap. On the other hand genius ceased working, as there is no monetary benefit for intelligence. Industrialists won't work because of heavy tax system. Capitalists stopped purchasing agricultural lands. Soon this system will become bizarre and uncanny. There will be Revolution."

"There is no place for revolution" confidently said Subbarao.

"There will be stomach-aches" a journalist murmured. There were smiles. Subbarao was grim. The foreigner continued, "If food is the only requirements of mankind, one-tenth of the country's work force is enough to feed the entire nation. How can the remaining people live? What is their source of income? They revolt. Since you have the support of God, no one will dare to revolt and the poor will die. It is not enough if we have land and labour, we should have capital and organisation also. And the Organiser and the Capitalist certainly expect more share than the labourer does. Equal society does not mean lowering the standards of upper classes, but to increase the standards of lower classes."

"Who are you?" asked Subbarao.

"I am Alfred Marshall" he said. Subbarao heard of him. Everybody looked at him with astonishment. Marshal was one of the most influential economists of last century and founder of neoclassical economics. His book '**Principles of Economics'** was dominant in the field of 'supply and demand'. He is known for his famous marginal utility theory.

Subbarao thought that he might have been sent by God to educate him on the basic economic principles. "Are you advocating us to support black money and corruption to enhance the purchasing power of the people?" he asked in a sarcastic voice.

"No" said Marshal. "What I want to impress is that sudden restriction, unplanned curbs and death threats do not solve the problem."

Subbarao said ruefully, "I did all this, not for me, but for the people and the society".

Marshal sighed, "We have no doubts about your intentions."

"Then what shall I do?" he asked like a child. Marshal encouraged, "Grow food without water, labour, seeds and fertilisers."

"I have no control over nature.'"

"So, you should now decide the future course of action."

Subbarao prayed with tears, "Oh God! Please guide me. What shall I do?"

...

It was again the time for the cattle to return home…

The red sky slowly darkened like a warrior's face who lost the war. Standing on a high hill top Subbarao shouted "…..God… O God..!"

Brahma appeared from the clouds. He also appeared upset. "….I knew the reason for calling me. But my dear son! I am sorry. I am also in the same muddle."

"What happened?" Subbarao wondered. Even Gods have problems.

"Venkatesh, Jagannath and Swami have raided me"

Subbarao was confused, "…Who are they?"

"Venkateswara Swami of seven hills, Jagannath from Poori and Swami Ayyappa from Kerala"

"Why did they raid on you?" more mystified he asked. "I am not able to make out anything. Please elaborate."

"People were committing sins like land grabbing, corruption, bribery etc..! Where there is sin, there is a fear. And where there is fear, there exists a temple." He paused. Subbarao could understand something. Brahma continued, "…due to your reforms, there is no sin. When there is no sin or desire, there would be no fear of God. So devotees ceased going to temples, mostly to Lord Venkateswara…! Thus he is accustomed to comforts. You know that he used to charge money even for a special darshan"

"Yes. Capitalist" Subbarao said bitterly. Unmindful of his comments, the old man continued, "….Subbarao! These Gods are all pulling my strings. Only Lord Kubera and Siva stood by me. I had to give up. I am withdrawing my boon given to you to build an equalitarian society. Forgive me!"

Subbarao stood silent for a long while. Then slowly he raised his head and said in chocked voice, "People won't forgive you."

"They will" replied Brahma. "In fact people are developing an aversion towards your reforms"

Subbarao was aghast. "What are you talking Swami?" His voice shrivelled, "Impossible."

"Yes. They are not resisting because of fear. Tell me who is happy? Lawyers, doctors, army, industrialists and even farmers and workers are gloomy with your reforms. Only 'idle and lazy people' have been benefited, because they know nothing except to sit and eat."

"But the corrupt, unethical and cheaters…"

"There is no separate community called corrupt. Every person has a shade of it. Percentage may vary from country to country and time to time. Don't you agree that the word 'selfishness' does exist in mankind from the beginning?" Brahma completed the last and the most important statement. *"…If there is a better way of living, man would have found it by now."*

All the trees, leaves, flowers and waterfalls swayed in agreement.

"Then what should I do?" questioned Subbarao.

"Change according to the system. Otherwise, unto your death you stay as an ordinary man hoping for a change in the society to uplift you. Under the disguise of common man, don't call your inability as integrity and don't claim your incompetency as honesty. Come out from your erroneous impression that the society is responsible for your suppression."

He was listening with apt attention with folded hands. God continued.

"Water costs now. In future pure air would also cost. You have to *earn it* for everything in future. And more importantly, don't think that one has to be unethical to earn money!"

The last statement was something that Subbarao had not thought all these days. Meanwhile God said, "On the other hand don't expect your country to change. Your population is 110 crore of which 1 crore are infants, 25 crore are students and are yet to be productive. 10 crore are central and 17 crore state government employees who don't work to their full capacity; 1 crore fraudulent politicians and their 5 crore hangers just swindle money, 20 crore does not do anything except eating and sleeping, 1 crore IT professionals don't work for your country, 15 crore unemployed, 9 crore retired, one crore are in hospitals and you find one crore people anytime in jail.*"

"Do you want to make me a pessimist?"

"No. A realist..! Never expect even God to give you *free* whatever you want. In fact, *temple* itself is the symbol of an investment system!! There were no temples during the Vedic period. The ancient man started praying God before going to hunting for a good 'catch'. Thus, with the increasing desire for health and prosperity, the demand for God increased. *Differences and inequalities are common since inception of human race.* Even Gods have inequalities. I, Brahma have very few temples. Lord Krishna says, 'You are responsible for your own deeds', and hence he also does not have many temples, whereas Lord Venkateswara who says, 'I am here to save you for your misdeeds' is the richest God."

Subbarao was astonished. He tried to digest the bitter truth.

"It is not out of place if I give some figures. If the entire world is condensed to a globe of *just 100 people*, 80 live in poverty, 70 illiterate, 50 suffer from hunger and malnutrition. Just six rich persons are holding 59% of total wealth. Only eight out of 100 has a wallet or a purse and some coins in it."

God bequeathed the last few sentences, "Dear Subbarao, do you know? If you wake up in good health next morning, you are luckier than one million people, who won't live through the week. You are better than 500 million people, if you have never experienced the horror of a war, the solitude of a prison, the pain of a torture and do not know what starvation is. You are luckier than 3 billion people if you can go to your place of worship in your country, without the fear of someone assaulting or killing you. If you have clothes on your body, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are wealthier than 40% of the world's population. If you are well educated to understand what I am saying, you are not one among the 3,000,000,000 people who cannot comprehend these facts…"

There was sudden silence. Everything was still. The stillness of air, quietness of the leaves and the silence of surrounding atmosphere made him shiver.

Then the final word came.

"So, instead of cursing the society, exasperating with the economic system and infuriating with the people around you, plan how best you can live in this world. Bye."

Saying so, Brahma jumped into the valley and disappeared.

Conversion of raw material:

Let us leave the intricacies and controversies of the mythic tale and fairy illustration. It is an imaginary theory about money, corruption and taxation and their influence on a country's economy. It is also to stress that if you are not earning money, believe that there is something wrong with you and not with the system or society.

A Mother took her son to a well-educated saint, different from fake miracle-prone Babas. "Swami…! My son is intelligent but the problem with him is that he is interested in everything other than studies. Please guide him" she pleaded.

Swami asked the boy, "About what should I tell you?"

The naughty boy teased showing the newly carpeted tar-road, "Tell me about that".

The knowledgeable Swami smiled and asked the boy to bring the round shaped tar-ball lying by the road side. "Can you tell me what would be the cost of the 'tar' in this ball?" he enquired. The boy replied, "May be five to ten rupees."

"But if the petroleum from this ball is processed in another form, it would become a synthetic product with which small threads can be manufactured. These threads are thinner than human hair and are used for stitching in heart operations. This small quantity of tar can yield about thousand such threads, each costing around ten thousand rupees. In another sense, the value of this ten-rupee worth tar-ball would have increased to ten million rupees if properly processed."

The boy was astonished. Sensing the enthusiasm in the boy's eyes, swami continued. "Your future depends on how you process your present. You are in the intermediate stage of life. The word 'intermedius' denotes 'in the middle of'. Presume yourself at a railway junction. One train takes you to Kashmir and another to Jaisalmer. Whether you want to spend the rest of your life in a flower garden or sand desert is decided at this intermediate stage. Think for yourself. Once you go to Jaisalmer, it is very difficult to come back. Entire life you should be contended with a salary of ten thousand."

Realising the morale, the boy bowed his head in reverence.

The motto of any manufacturing industry is conversion of raw material into finished product. It involves identifying the sources of raw materials, essential services and dealing with the problems arising during conversion. We are also like raw petroleum. *Conversion of 'raw' into happiness is our 'life industry'*. Then how to identify the 'raw' material in us?

Jack R. Simplot was buying lambs, raising them and then selling them back for just an income of $10 per month. He realised that a good entrepreneur never believes in routine. With all his savings, he patented freeze dried French-fried potatoes, which later became a key to McDonald's success. Then he established Micron Technology Corporation *that reached a yearly turnover of $500 million within five years. He was the 89th richest person in the world and died recently at the age of 99.*

Let me narrate another fascinating story of a woman who worked for 5 rupees per day and now the CEO of Keys Software Solutions in USA. Mrs Jyothi Reddy stayed in an orphanage in her childhood, shivered under torn blankets with hunger.

She was married at 16 when she was working as an agriculture labour in a farm house. She studied after marriage at Nehru Yuvak Kendra and then completed her post-graduation through distance learning. When a NRI relative came to her place, she was fascinated by her.

She learnt computers, migrated to USA. She underwent many harrowing experiences when she went to Mexico to obtain a visa. A flash of an idea struck her and she established a company to assist the people to get their Visas. Her commitment and dedication fetched her success she dreamt of.

It is not the story of just a woman going to America and making some money. She never forgot her roots. In every visit to India she spends time at children's homes and provides assistance to orphans.

The term 'Wealth' is derived from the old English word, "weal" which means wellbeing. Richness can be divided into two types- Dead capital and Revenue yielding assets. Let us name them as 'Wealth' and 'Prosperity' respectively. Do you want to be wealthy or prosperous? This is a tricky question and let us analyse it.

Wealth and prosperity:

Upper class people maintain wealth, their children are typically schooled to maintain (and increase) their wealth and pass it to future generations. The middle class live on daily or monthly income, limited savings and retirement pensions. The poor have no wealth accumulation. They don't own more than a trivial amount of assets.

When I ask young chartered accountants, "What is the total wealth of your family as on today?" only then many of them start calculating their assets. To manage finances, one should first assess the present value of his wealth and plan further.

Your wealth consists of your house, vehicles etc. You have to *spend* for taxes and repairs to maintain (and enjoy) them. On the other side, if you have a house or a taxi given on rent, they yield income to you. To be precise, your first house is your *wealth* and the second house on which you receive rent is your *prosperity*.

If you stop working from today, for how long you can continue to live with the "same" comforts with the income (like rent, interest and dividend) *without liquidating* any of your assets? It is your prosperity.

Do not get shocked with the fact that an average Indian cannot live for more than five days under this definition.

A software engineer took a loan of 80 lakhs and purchased a flat, car and furniture within a year of employment. He paid 80% of his salary as loan instalments. Even after five years of payment, he was still in 70% of debt. Major share of his payments were adjusted towards interest. Then he lost his job due to recession. After paying '60 lakhs of rupees' during these five years, he had to vacate the house and surrender the car and furniture to his creditors. This is the example of bad financial planning.

Earning first five million is difficult. Afterwards money pours in, if you are shrewd and careful.

When your income and expenditure are equal, it is called *base line.* The excess income over expenditure is added to your wealth, or vice versa. When the income increases, you have two options, either to go for more *comforts* or build up your revenue yeilding assets. When you save, your financial matters get stronger. This can better be explained with an example.

Developing prosperity:

The below example is on the assumption that the real estate is not in a boom; the price of the new building and old (second hand) building after five years would be same.

Suppose you want to take a loan of 50 lakhs to purchase a new house and willing to clear in 30 years. According to the present State Bank of India rate of 10% (Principle: 50 lakhs + 130 lakhs interest) you have to pay a monthly instalment of approximately Rs. 50,000. Suppose you don't purchase the house and stay in a rented one for 20,000 and save the balance of 30,000 in recurring deposit. Do you know how much worthy you would be at the end of 30 years? Hold your breath. Around 5 crores..!

If you can postpone your desire for 5 years (keeping aside other considerations like status, satisfaction of staying in own house, etc.) and stay in a rented house at 20,000 per month, you can save 30,000 per month. At the end of 5th year you would have a cash balance of 23 lakhs (18 lakhs principal + 5 lakhs cumulative interest). Now you can purchase the same five year old house for the same amount, because it is second hand. It is enough if you take a loan of Rs.27 lakhs. This amount can be paid by you @ 50,000 per month (for which anyway you are prepared) approximately in 6 years. By this, you can save from 7th year @ 50,000 per month. By the end of 30 years you would be owner of your house + approximately 5 crores of rupees cash. Simple calculation, but amazing… Isn't it? Postponement of desires for few years thus increases your wealth.

Visualising the future: A good businessman sees ahead of others. Here are few tips :

We have single occupancy rooms in hospitals. Only one attendant is allowed to stay with the patient. In future, there will be cottages within the compound of the hospitals. The spouse and children can stay with the patients (other than those in I.C.U). The doctors would visit them. Thus a more homely atmosphere is created.

Same way cottages would be constructed in the hostels of big educational institutions. They would be given to parents for two are three days on rent to stay with their children and cook for them. There would be certainly huge demand. It may cost a lot, but who cares?

Dynamics of earning money:

1. Foresee the advantage: It is like purchasing the land at a proposed outer ring road predicting the future before others envisaged it.

> *A film named* 'Railway Platform' *was released in 1955. It is surprising that the shrewd (though crooked) commercial and entrepreneurial skills were screened more than half century ago. A long-distance train comes to an unexpected halt due to damaged railway lines. The passengers are told that the train would not move for next 24 hours. A person quickly descends from the train, rushes to the solitary shop in the village and takes it on rent for a day. The owner of the shop gets surprised by the amount offered to him. He could not guess how much profit he is going to lose. The passenger hires four labourers who can cook. He appoints another two to draw water from the well. He sells food and even the water to stranded passengers. Thus, a businessman should always foresee.*

2. Plan novel ideas: When a new idea creeps up, our immediate reaction would be '*yes… idea is good…but…*' and we stop there! We are sceptical if somebody tells us something different. When he succeeds with his idea we say, 'yes… he told… I knew it would be a hit…'

> *When one of our friends told a thought, we were all cynical. But, can you imagine how much our friend earned within a span of two years? More than a few millions..! He took a piece of land near Karnataka border when liquor was banned in Andhra Pradesh. He established a hut-like bar. There is nothing special in that. He provided for night stay to customers in the backyard of the bar, as they cannot return in an inebriated condition due to the police check near the state border. There was unimaginable rush and you know the final result.*

3. Cross your self-believed borders: Many people underestimate their strengths. Only the first break-through is difficult. Once you cross the barrier, the results give you the strength. Challenge your core competence.

> *Anandita Dutta entered the Guinness World Record when she smeared mirchi juice in her eyes and also ate 51 spicy chillies. It surprised the entire world. Within three months six people could successfully attempt it. This example shows that we have enormous untapped strengths.*

4. Try to be far above the No. 2: A number one person competes with self to be sure that nobody would reach him. Even though he is at a higher plane than number two, he still loves to be far above. He relaxes *only* when he wants to and not because there is no competition.

An athlete exercised day and night, controlled his diet and practiced to participate in a thousand meter race. On the destined day, he started running at the sound of the pistol. He ran, ran and just ran. Apart from the target, he saw nothing. Before he completed the fifth and final round, there was tremendous applause from the crowds. He realised that four persons ahead of him were already crossing the line. He was upset and was in tears. Then he found the organisers running towards him to congratulate. Astonished he asked, 'But they are ahead of me'. The organisers assured, 'They are still in the fourth lap. The applause is for you'.

5. Wait for the correct time: Strike when the iron is hot. Strike when other people are not aware when and where to hit.

When Left - oriented Pranab Mukherjee resigned as finance minister of India, we all knew that the Prime Minister would take up finance portfolio temporarily. But many are not aware that Man Mohan Singhji is a pro-reformer and it would have a positive effect on the stock market at least for some time. On my advice, my friend invested ten lakhs and earned around 3 lakhs in a week. But beware. Sometimes this concept may boomerang also.

An altruist prayed God for decades. At last God appeared, "What is your desire?" He asked. The philanthropist prayed, "Adjust the life of each person in proportion to his good deeds and sins." The God said he could not properly understand what his desire was. The disciple said, "Creators, inventors of medicines, people like Mahatma Gandhi should live for thousand years. Corrupt politicians, porno film makers, mafia and inhuman like Bin Laden should live lesser age. In one sentence, those who does harm to mankind should die at the earliest."

God okayed "Your wish appears to be logical and sincere. I accept it immediately." The moment he completed his boon, God himself had fallen to death.

Methods of earning:

I wrote a novel dealing with earning money, which was made into a film 'Challenge', wherein the hero earns money legally but heroine says that the ways he chose are not ethical. Thus, there are seven different combinations of earning money:

1. Legal and ethical: An employee, or government pays salary to the employee after deducting taxes at source. For the employee it is legal and ethical earning.

2. Legal but unethical: A doctor suggests various unnecessary diagnostic tests and receives commission. He is legally correct but not ethically. A stockbroker issues a 'buy' recommendation to his innocent customers knowing that the company is going 'down' and the existing shareholders are dumping their stocks. His kickbacks are legal but unethical.

3. Illegal and unethical: A businessman conceals black money and does not pay taxes. An employee accepts bribes to do a favour and cheat government. Both are illegal and immoral.

4. Illegal and unscrupulous: A forest mafia kills guards for its survival. An unlicensed mining mafia burns the huts of the tribal people who oppose its operations and forcibly evacuate them from their hamlets.

5. Legal but devilish: Most companies like Nike, Gap and H&M which produce consumer goods, subcontract their work to factories in India, China, Nigeria and Southeast Asia. These countries in turn use child and slave labour legally. In Nigeria, it is alleged that Shell Oil is responsible for environmental degradation and displacement of indigenous people. One out of every ten children dies before the age of five due to lack of pure drinking water. In that country 'Shell police' beat environmental activists for opposing such a cruelty. It is legal in the country but devilish.

6. Illegal but ethical: The Medical Council of India does not allow doctors and hospitals to keep hoardings and advertise to attract clients. The council opines that after-all doctors are professionals and why should they behave like shopkeepers in order to attract customers? But some people argue that how can young doctors and newly established hospitals survive without advertisement? Both arguments are ethically correct but advertisement is still illegal.

7. Playing on the faith*:* If you have few million rupees, train a smart person in magic, mesmerism, hypnotism and if possible make him swallow a small idol and be able to bring it back. The person must be able to speak few words about peace and humanity. Spend few lakhs initially to gather disciples, publish few books about his miracles and just see how money pours in.

Purchase lands at a remote place but nearer to the city or town if you can invest few crores. Construct a temple with the remaining money. Engage people to canvas about the temple. Take care that the miracle stories spread in newspapers. Manage the media. There should be some sort of a festival every fortnight and a celebrity to give a lecture. The land cost would boost up by ten times within a few years.

But is it required that you indulge in such illegal, devilish, immoral and non-ethical practices to earn money? Cheat innocent people with your intelligence or power? Self - deceive yourself?

A modern philosopher says: Money is power. Everybody thinks of money. Even those saints who are thinking of the other world… they are also thinking of comforts in heaven. They call it virtue. By virtue you can purchase a better house in heaven, a better vehicle (RADHAM) and a better woman.

People are thirsty for money and power because deep down they are empty. Somehow they want to stuff that emptiness with something - may be money, power, prestige, respectability, character, virtue. Anything will do.

There are two types of people in the world: those who try to stuff their inner emptiness, and those very rare precious beings who try to see the inner emptiness.

Those who try to stuff it remain empty, frustrated. They go on collecting garbage; their whole life is futile and fruitless. Only the other kind of very precious people try to look into their inner emptiness without any desire to stuff it. They become real philosophers. After understanding this philosophy of Buddha, my life took a turn... for betterment.

SIX STEPS TO EARN MONEY

1ST STEP - DESIRE…! JUST ONE SET OF QUESTIONS

One: Do I want to earn money or am I really happy with what I have or showing off to public my inability to earn money as happiness? Am I really a philosopher ready to renounce the world or am I that 'fox at sour grape' type? If I were given two options, which do I prefer – resting happily without tensions or earning money?

2ND STEP - OPPORTUNITY..! JUST TWO SET OF QUESTIONS.

One: If there are no opportunities, how can I create an opportunity? I am not brilliant in education. Somehow passed the exam..! I have no skills at all, not a good barber or carpenter. I am not good at business. Can I still earn money?

Two: How much would it cost me financially and how much time should I spend to create an opportunity? How much physical and mental strain is involved in this? What should I do to develop my physical and mental strength?

3RD STEP - UNEARTH THE REASON..! JUST THREE SETS OF QUESTIONS.

One. When many middle class and poor people could become rich, what is holding me back from becoming rich? What is that they have which I don't have? Did I ever look into my drawbacks that are holding me back till now to become rich?

Two: If at all a qualification is required to become rich, what is it? One should have a basic qualification to become a doctor or an engineer, but what is the prerequisite to become rich? When many uneducated are becoming rich, why can't I?

Three: I might have committed some mistakes earlier. But there are people who had done bigger blunders than me, got derailed, still rectified their misdeeds and are back on to the right path. Even naxalites are taking the help of Government. Prisoners and politicians are building their life after coming out of jail. Then why am I cursing myself for my past mistakes and retiring at a lazy and pessimistic zone?

4TH STEP - SOLUTION..! JUST FOUR SETS OF QUESTIONS.

One: What are the obstacles I may have to face if I want to reconstruct my life from the zero-based position? Who is the correct person to advise me on this?

Two: How to get financial, mental and physical strengths? What are the sources?

Three: Is this problem really that big as I envisage it or am I unnecessarily assuming it big?

Four: If I fail in this attempt what happens at the most? How much disastrous would it be? Will I be completely ruined? If I am ruined, what would I be left with at the end? Do I die? If I refuse to die, how can I make my breath stronger to get what I want?

5TH STEP - MONEY...! JUST FIVE TRUTHS.

One. Believe that there is money. Unlike a century ago, now there is a lot of money. There is money in real estates, shares, establishing educational institutions and in aquarium business and even in a good pan shop. Only requisite is to know the *place* to dig and the *tool* to use. Do you know? A skilled electrician earns more than an average engineering graduate. The situation was different in earlier days. People had to work a lot harder to earn money. Now… visit any crowded bazaar, a shopping mall or a costly restaurant you find money, money and money.

Two. Believe that 'you' can earn it. There were three students from a business community in my seventh standard. They used to come in a horse-cart. We used to feel that they were born to earn money and we were destined to be their (or government) employees. Such sense of psychosis was imbibed in our blood. The days have changed now. Any person with intelligence, skill and entrepreneurship can earn money. In fact many government and private institutions are providing facilities and loans. If you are worthy, there are many corporates to take you with overwhelming perks. An owner of a giant manufacturing company told me once, 'Recommend worthy candidates. Just send to us and we employ them. It's really becoming difficult to get them. We recruit a fresher, pay him heavily to train, and after few months find him not employable, and thus our money and time is wasted.'

Three. Create money atmosphere. Whom are you associated with? Birds of same feather flock together. A painter would be fish out of water in the group of cricketers or a romanticist poet among rugby players. On the other hand a writer in the company of readers, a singer with composers and a vocalist with music lovers get inspiration. If you want to earn money, be with people who are passionate to earn money, enthusiastic to become rich, talk new ventures, plan and work for *financial* enrichment.

Four. Inspire with money. When you see a villa amidst eye-arresting garden, or an astounding palace with a swimming pool and a helipad, don't assume that they belong to a mafia leader or a corrupt politician. Sportsmen, industrialists, filmy people, singers, painters may also own them not by cheating, murdering or gambling but by working sincerely. Consider how they might have sacrificed simple unproductive pleasures to reach those heights. That is the *positive approach* towards earning money.

Five. Kick it. Yes. Kick it after earning sufficient money. Never become a slave. Money plays havoc once you start dancing to its tune. You become greedy, the charm in your eyes goes and you will be prepared to do anything to earn more money. You lose relationships, fame; and in the process *lose yourself.* Start doing activities that give you mental satisfaction. 'Charity' is the best..! This is how I constructed a temple and Vidya Peetam for tribal students after being influenced by charity homes at Dharmastala at Karnataka.

Don't worry about what will happen after we are gone, because when we return to dust, we will feel nothing. Don't worry too much about children, for children will have their own destiny and should find their own way. Don't be your children's slave. Care for them, love them, give them gifts but also enjoy your money while you can. Life should have more to it than working from the cradle to the grave!!

Your children take for granted that they are rightful heirs to your wealth; but you have *no claims* to their money.Uncaring children may fight over your assets even when you are still alive, and wish for the day you will die so that they can inherit your properties and wealth.

Respect money. We are aware how some rich actors of the previous generation; gamblers, spendthrifts and drunkards of present generation spend money lavishly and become paupers.

Spend the money that should be spent, enjoy what should be enjoyed and donate what you are able to donate.

➢ ***When to give?*** If you want to give tomorrow, are you sure that you would like till then? Have 'it' till then? Are you sure you would have same 'urge' to give then? So… give now.

➢ ***What to give?*** From Money to anything, even a flower does the needful. A smile to a stranger may be the only good thing that he received in days and weeks.

➢ ***How to give:*** Don't feel proud in giving; let the receiver not feel humiliated. Give quietly.

➢ ***How much one should provide for heirs?*** Warren Buffett gives the answer: Leave your kids enough to do anything, but not enough to do nothing.

➢ ***How much to give?*** Give as much that you can forget the next moment.

*Ekalavya was asked whether he regretted anytime for giving his thumb to his Guru. His reply has to be believed true, as it was asked when he was dying. "Yes" he said, "Only once when my Guru Dronacharya was killed deceitfully with the false news that his son died in the war..! If only I had the thumb, nobody would have dared to come nearer to him" **

Personality development motivators in every Sales Executive Meetings quote this example about two sales persons who go to rustic Africa to find out the market potential there.

One sends a telegram to the head office, 'No scope to sell; these tribal don't wear shoes', while another salesman informs 'Excellent scope. These people don't know the advantage of wearing shoes. Send all varieties.'

The original creator of this popular example is 'Akio Morita'. His theory exposes Sony Corporation's philosophy to create market for products for which there is no apparent demand. They created artificial demand for products like Pocket Radio, Tummy TV, Digital camera and the Walkman.

6TH STEP - EARN MONEY..! JUST SIX GEARS

ONE : First gear is *principal competency*. Everyone would like to be successful. Yet some people fail without knowing the reason. Analyse both successful and unsuccessful people engaged in the *same type of business* that you would like to start. If you begin with analysing the reasons behind failure people, you get depressed even before starting the business. Hence first study the dynamics behind successful people.

A, B, C establish three shoe business houses. A invests few million rupees just on internal decoration. It becomes talk of the town. Purchasing in his shop is considered a prestigious symbol. The stock is priced double the normal rate. The extremely rich customers are few, but enough for him to earn huge profits.

B is talented skilled worker. With an investment of just few thousands of rupees, he stitches shoes and gives them as compliments for dignitaries of the town. Soon the talk spreads. People throng to his small tiny residence cum shop. Each shoe is made according to specific design and style and is a show-piece. He makes enormous money.

C has not set up a show room but a go-down. The shoes are dumped. If a customer finds a suitable right shoe, he has to search the junk for the matching left shoe. The shop does not supply even a carry bag, but people swamp. The catchword is… 'Cheap'. The sales peak.

A, B and C recognised their *x-factor*. They know how to cash on their wisdom and skill on one side and the psyche of customer on the other side. They know exactly who their customers are. The 'sutra' for success is principal competency.

TWO: Second gear is enhancement of *health*, physical, social, intellectual and mental. This gear is the ability to resist physical hardship, and mental strain. It is like an orthodox boy setting up a pork slaughter house. Mental suffering includes shame, scandal and discouragement in your profession or in business. A clerk from income tax or commercial tax or even a police is enough to humiliate you. Ability to resist includes determination, patience and strong desire to win.

You require good health for certain types of professions and businesses. You cannot sell mirchi-bajji to late night movie audience if you are an asthma patient. If you are allergic to dust, you cannot be a salesman travelling on a two-wheeler.

Patience is another prime quality of good mental health. One of the famous lyricists with extraordinary poetic flavour and command over the language told me that he had to wait for 40 years to write his first song. He later penned more than five thousand songs and regarded as a 'manifestation of Goddess Saraswathi'.

A multibillionaire was averse to 'insurance' and asked his secretary not to entertain any agent. When she was on leave, the temporary assistant sent an agent in. The billionaire was in good mood and gave five minutes patient hearing, within which the agent could convince him with the advantages of insurance. The rich man signed the cheque for a big amount and said, "I am convinced. You are good. But do you know, earlier I didn't allow 162 agents even to step into my chamber. You are lucky."

Taking his cheque the agent said politely, "Pardon me sir, it is me who came 162 times earlier".

THREE: Third gear is developing further on *inborn talent*. Skill is a learnt ability. Convert your ability into proficiency. That is '*character creation*'. You might have scored good marks in Maths, Science and Accountancy. You have to weigh between them and develop core interest in one of them keeping in mind the future scope. If you select a subject without faith in your talent or interest but just by peer or parent influence or tempted by its future scope, it is against character creation.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is from Austria. His family was so poor that they were excited when they bought a new refrigerator. His father worked in German Nazi army and fought against its arch-rival America. Even then Arnold could become governor of an American state. He is a bodybuilder, actor, businessman, investor, writer, politician and former governor (called Governator, a portmanteau of 'governor' and 'terminator'). When asked how he could manage all these qualities, he replied with a single word 'faith'.

FOUR: Start early: Time is the most *expensive* commodity available for *free*. Its value is proportionate to how you spend it. Increase the 'value' of your time. But how?

We cannot increase our life span, but surely can increase its productivity. How early you start your life is important than how long you live. Many great people including leaders, players, painters, musicians, writers and scientists started their career at an early age. The earlier you start your career, the sooner you can enjoy its fruits.

Maria Sharapova picked the tennis racket at age 4. World No. 1 tennis player and an 18 times grand slam winner Martina Navratilova spotted the four-year-old kid in an exhibition match and recommended her parents to take the girl to United States and join an academy.

The U.S. coach was reluctant to train such a 'young' girl, but with her first stroke with the racket, she has blown away all his doubts.

But life was not bed of roses for the little kid. She had to stay for years in a poor dormitory and stay away from her parents in foreign land, due to their financial restrictions.

She made her grand slam debut in Australian open and earned first $ 600,000 when she was just fourteen. When asked for the secret of her success, she said "Knowing the value of time".

Our civilisation would have geared up at double the rate if the human life span is 200 years. If Einstein, Newton, Edison and Louis Pasteur lived for 'another' hundred years, we would have found cure for cancer, AIDS; and would have started living on other planets by this time.

Wisdom grows along with age, but for some people age comes alone. Improve your x-factor (talent and skill) from early age. After education, don't sit idle searching for a job. If you consider yourself a waste, you get depressed slowly as an inoperative machine that rusts soon. Enjoying the state of 'staying idle' is the most dangerous disease than cancer. Fix into a job however small it may be. It is a bonus if such a job is something related to your 'career'. If you are a student or even an employee, identify your talent and spend time on developing it. You find lots of relaxation in it.

Awaiting my chartered accountancy result, I joined State Financial Corporation in my vacation. My salary was 250 rupees per month. I liked the job and continued even after passing the exam, for a 100 rupees hike. Within three years, I was promoted twice. I am proud to say that I was never corrupt. Impressed with this quality, the Managing Director, when he became the chairman of a bank, offered me a senior executive post. I was 29 then.

Your work force is proportionate to the intensity of your desire, resembling Newton's second law. First write down all your aims and wishes clearly and specifically. Which type of fame or wealth do you want to develop?

Identify those persons who acquired the same qualities and study how they worked to accomplish their goals. Follow them and change according to your convenience.

Wealth is not what you show to others, but what you enjoy. 'Wealth is the man's capacity to think' said Ayn Rand. What the outsiders see as your riches is different from your inner affluence. This is 'Productive wealth' to be gained at various levels of age. Life is divided into four stages Balya, Yavvana, Koumara and Vardhakya.

1. In Balya, you should acquire knowledge, wisdom, obedience, discipline, skill in time management and sports.

2. In Yavvana, it has to be thirst for money and recognition, bubbling with competitive spirit, attentiveness and enthusiasm. It is the age to channel the overflowing energies to right path without falling for attractive and unhealthy traps.

3. At middle age inspire with fame, money, power, comfort, compassion and humanity. Work to develop family, social contacts, strong relations among the family members. Build life for a comfortable retirement.

4. The ultimate contentment, satisfaction, philanthropy and spirituality should guide us at the old age. It is the age when we focus back on our life. Unsuccessful people regret that their life had been wasted; whereas achievers feel proud of their accomplishments, when they look back. They have only few regrets. They try to attain more wisdom even when they are confronting death.

FIVE: Fifth gear is controlling attractions and choosing correct route. 'Mesmeric fields' deviate you from your target.

Any great success begins with a small idea, but what turns an idea into reality is the 'commitment'. Ideal goals are different from materialistic goals. We love, adore and admire somebody for the great qualities but our own goals may be different. A blend of qualities from different personalities is preferable. For this reason you should have more than one inspirational icon. When I was lecturing this concept, a student asked who my ideal person was. 'Lord Krishna' I said unhesitatingly.

"…Setting aside that he is an incarnation of God, there are various adaptable qualities in him. Born in a jail, he was carried away to a safer place in a stormy night. He had to fight with demons and wrongdoers from the childhood. He was not a king but a kingmaker..! He was a planner and a diplomat. He always gave but never craved. He fought to win over his beloved Rukmini. While tackling the blames made against him, he married princess Jambavathi. It is like constructing a fort with the stones thrown against you. The best part is that he never wept. He was naughty and playful in his boyhood and later turned out to be the best counsellor in the world with his Bhagavad-Gita. He knew how to tackle his rivals with, either a smile or the 'viswarupa'. All these qualities constitute the best personality according to me and hence more than sixteen thousand girls adored him.

If you aspire to become your 'ideal he', your dreaming is correct. But many times it does not happen so. See the example below.

For the question "Who is your ideal?" the answers from students range from Mother Theresa to Abdul Kalam and Swami Vivekananda. When the question is placed differently, 'When you grow up whom do you want to be like?' the response includes Bill Gates, Ambani or internationally acclaimed pop singers or sports personalities. Thus our 'ideal-he' concept differs from our aspirations.

SIX: Sixth gear is practising success. A habit acquired through frequent repetition is an unconscious pattern of behaviour. It ranges from brushing the teeth to maintaining the cleanliness of the study room.

If we cultivate the habit of paying attention to even small things, it guides us towards a healthy life like hygiene, time management and pleasantness. Perfection becomes an unconscious part of us including the success. Final step to success is four habits: practicality, generosity, ethics and a mood to enjoy success. If you practice these four qualities, automatically money would pour in. You will be on top of the hill, just watching the money flowing under your feet.

Handing over the small royalty amount for my first novel, the publisher friend casually asked me, 'How much do you want to earn in your life Mr. Veerendranath?'

I said, "I will be happy to own a small house and another lakh of rupees in fixed deposits to get secured interest and I will be contended."

The old man smiled, 'You won't stop there. Go ahead and see'. He reminded his words after thirty years when he came to bless my one-crore project for tribal children. He is no more now, but I can realise that he might have foreseen a future professional writer. Yes. I did not retire from writing or from earning money after constructing a house and with one lakh deposit.

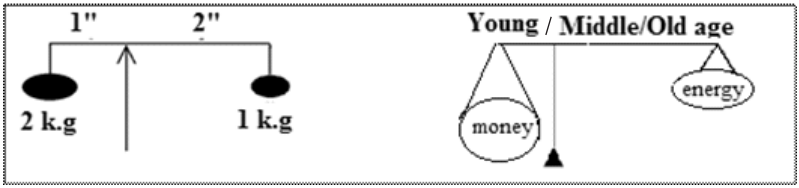
Writing had become my habit, interest, thirst and pass time. Money and fame followed automatically.

There is another success story. This is about a multi-millionaire, who was earlier working in the press of my first publisher as a small time binder. He approached me for permission to publish my next book but said that he cannot afford to offer royalty equal to the established original publisher. I gave him a novel (that was later made into a film in Telugu and Kannada and was adjudged as best film by Karnataka Government, and won best serial director award for me in Telugu).

It was an instantaneous hit breaking records with first edition being sold out on the first day of release itself. He is also no more now, but worked sincerely, ethically and became my regular publisher since then, marketing my English, Kannada and Tamil books.

Financial planning:

If you had read physics, you must be familiar with the 'balancing machine principle'. The shorter the length of the shoulder, the more it can hold the weight. The diagram below shows it.



The more the balancing rod tilts towards left; you can easily take up more responsibility. In other words, you can earn more money when you are energetic. The older you are; you have more *expenditure* and *responsibilities*. Start earning from young age.

A lakh earned and deposited at your young age fetches you thousand per month. For one lakh loan taken, you have to pay thousand per month as interest entire life. If you are from middle class, save money when you are young instead of spending on luxuries.

People often say, 'Why do I need a financial plan? I don't have anything to invest. I can do it myself'. If you don't design your own life, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan.

Why do architects draw blue prints before construction? Why do coaches create game plans ahead of the international matches? Why do teachers build curriculums? We need to transfer our ideas from our mind onto paper so that we can see and add them to our vision. Otherwise we tend to lose monetary track with our busy career. That is why we require a plan, a financial plan. I have never paid more than few thousands tax due to correct planning, without generating any black money.

When we feel that there is nothing to invest, we don't think about saving. Our mind turns to survival mode. We think, "It's ok. After making some money I will plan to save." No. It's wrong thinking.

A financial plan is simply a guide to help you determine where you stand financially, where you want to be, and how to get there. Be clear where you want to be after five, ten or thirty years?

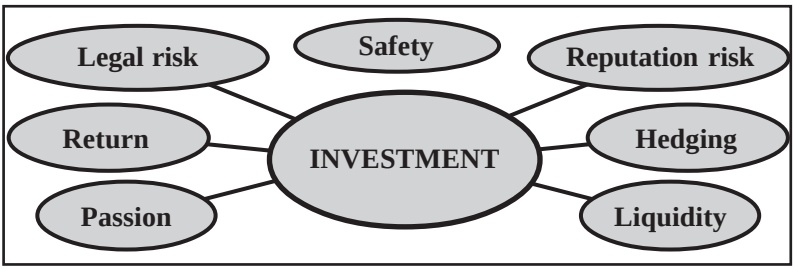
People resist creating a financial plan until they find themselves in a pinch because it seems like too much trouble. A financial plan is simply a route map to reach short, mid and long-term goals.

What are your investment goals? Can you add to your investments on a regular basis (recurring)? Set a time frame. When do you want your money back? Do you want regular returns like rentals, interest and dividends? Or are you saving for a long-term goal like retirement or a higher education of your child (cumulative)? Or are you looking forward to fulfilling some short term dreams like purchasing a car or for the wedding of your daughter?

Set aside some emergency fund for the unexpected medical bills, loss of a job, car repairs etc. Investment in land gives you one time capital gain. You may become a millionaire overnight with a real estate boom, but there is a risk of improper title deeds, mafia occupying your land, risk of having no buyer when you want to sell due to recession. Gold prices increase but we don't sell it for sentimental reasons.

How much money can you invest? What is your investing style? Conservative or aggressive? How much can you afford to put at risk? It is not wise to put all of your eggs in one basket. Invest some amount for lesser return but where your money is safe, such as fixed deposit, capital assured mutual funds etc., some part into risk investments and stock broking depending on your *shock-absorbing* cushion.

Individual investments differ from corporate investments. Companies take into consideration legal and reputation risks. Hedging is a method for reducing risk where combination of assets is selected to offset the movements of each other. Let us discuss here only individual investments.



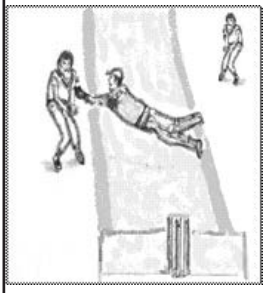
Return on investment plays major role more than safety and liquidity for many. Best examples are people losing in chit funds. Some people have passion for ornaments. Of course gold price increases, but nobody sells them for return or liquidation purpose. Passion has no logic. When somebody asked me why I invested a huge per cent of my earning in an Aashram, I said 'I love to have it'. Whether to spend on purchasing a mobile or a text book depends on the student's passion.

Income from agriculture is tax exempt. Minimise Taxes. This means taking full advantage of tax-deferred investments. If you have black amount, opt for purchasing anything between autos and flats. They give regular rental income, but the resale value will not be encouraging.

Other than your job, tuitions, side business and online marketing are for extra income. Unless you have great shock-absorbing capacity, don't involve in stock exchange trading business. It requires lot of planning, analysis and emotional balance. I have seen many intelligent people who believed in them-selves financial experts, losing heavily in this type of trading. Few people committed suicide also.

Keep in mind the alarming inflation rate. Pure currency may not have the same purchase value when the inflation rate is high. We have to accept the fact that the power of our money is going to be worthless in the future with the rate at which the petro-prices are increasing.

People say money is not everything. May be. But remember Ayn Rand's quote: *If you think money is the root for every evil, have you ever asked what the 'root' of the money is? Whoever said money cannot buy happiness, simply didn't know where to go for shopping."*



The simple but main difference between great and normal people is that the former concentrate and works *a bit more*. When a fielder throws the ball from the boundary line to the wickets, the one-second extra speed sometimes decides the fate of the match. Always strive for the 'extra'. Start with small issues. Next time when you brush your teeth, or write your notes, put in some extra concentration for few more minutes, and you will enjoy the difference. That is practicing success.

Reasons for being unable to earn money:

Why do people want to become great but end up 'ordinary'?
Why people don't earn money in spite of their huge ambition?
Why does a student aspiring to be an IAS, does not study well?
Why an IPS aspirant does not develop physical stamina?
Why does a housewife want to do 'something' but never does?

Let me take my experience with film industry to give better examples with regard to earning money. Aspiring youth wander around the film studios, but many of them end up as clap boys. They attribute their failure to lack of godfather. They never understand that nobody can stop the in-built talent supported by sincerity coupled with good PR skills.

In my thirty years of experience, hundreds of youth had approached me requesting for help to enter the film field. Only one to two per-cent could succeed. Why not others? I presume the following are reasons:

YOU TALK, BUT DON'T WALK: You always talk about your dreams to be a professional writer or a director. You tell people the plots, ideas and stories that you want to write. You keep all your works in your mental notebook, but never put them on paper. You do everything… except writing. You fumble at the time of storytelling.

YOU PROCRASTINATE: You write two pages, want to write further, but too busy with other work. You need to go to a movie with friends, or decide to write after your favourite TV show. Even if you start writing, you catch up sleep after five minutes. No matter how much you want to work, you just can't seem to sit down and do it. You have very many excuses but you never realise that *excuse is worse than a lie*.

YOU DON'T SPEND TIME IN PREPARING THE FOUNDATION: A farmer has to wait for few months after sowing to harvest the crop. If you are expecting results from the first day of your venture, you sure will be disappointed. You cannot expect overnight results sitting in a comfort zone. This may be the reason why people coming from poor families prove their mettle in film field, rather than those financially comfortable.

One of my assistants, a top director now, worked as a waiter in a hotel and as a massage boy in a parlour. Another girl, who was a school teacher for a salary of 700 rupees per month, is now one of the wealthy script writers in Tollywood.

You have a negative outlook: You always talk negatively about your own skills like "Writing is a waste of time. There are no publishers. There's too much competition, not remunerative. I don't know how to approach directors." You believe neither in *yourself* nor in your dreams.

You have more other interests: Somebody says that a young director should watch films to gain knowledge. You start watching box-office hits to understand the success formula; on the other hand flop films to assess the reasons for failure and art films for critical appreciation. In due course you develop interest in 'watching' and you become a critic rather than creator, and land up as a movie buff.

You do not have mental and physical stamina for the job: My driver's daughter wanted to become an ad-film director. She was allergic to travel as I noticed her vomiting five to six times in a span of one hour while travelling in the car. Film direction requires lots of stamina and I advised her that the field does not suit her. She was reluctant and joined a *mediocre* film training institution paying a lakh of rupees and came out after six months with a piece of paper called 'diploma in movie direction'.

You form your own worthless philosophy: In the above case, it was a huge amount for her father. I told her "Ad film making requires more creativity than shooting techniques. You need not join any school, spending such a huge amount. Join as an assistant director and learn work." She said, "Direction is an art in your days. Now it is a science." I was astonished with her reply. I missed their track for some time and saw her after five years happily married with three kids.

You don't work on basics: You cannot expect a person to become a professional lyricist without basic knowledge about the difference between a poem and a free verse. When a boy showed the manuscripts of his songs, I was dissatisfied, advised him to go back, work on *grammar*, read some literature and gain basic knowledge instead of wasting money staying in the metro. Keeping aside my advice, he wandered around studios for a year and returned to his village having his dreams shattered.

You don't know the approach: Highly talented people have already settled in the field long ago, and they have good relations with the industry. You have not only to work on your creative skills but develop *public relations* also. Marketing is an art and plays a vital role more than your creativity.

Peter Principle:

1. Why don't people work to their full capacity and utilise their leisure time for a better purpose?
2. Why don't people try to develop their intelligence, working capacities and discipline?
3. Why do some prefer to retire before becoming physically weak?
4. When there are so many competent people, why the incompetent is promoted as their boss?
5. How and why do gossipmongers and worthless fellows succeed?
6. Why do sometimes super-intelligent and super-competent people fail miserably in life ?

Raymond Hull, a playwright had these doubts that we all have in common. He wanted elucidation for them and approached a psychiatrist called Lawrence Peter. The doctor gave various clarifications on people's lethargy and incompetence. Thrilled by his explanations, Raymond Hull proposed the doctor to write on the subject and he co-authored.

The book 'WHY THINGS GO WRONG' became a bestseller instantly. The fascinating and humorous book says that a person advances to his highest degree of competence and then will remain at a level at which he is most incompetent. It became popular as Peter Principle in official bureaucracy. You reach a stage that you think it's the peak, and cease to work further to develop your *Shadvidha Aiswaryas*.

For the first question 'why people don't work to full capacity?' the doctor's answer is *lethargy*.

> *Suppose I have a small car. I may try for a B.M.W that would cost ten times more than my present car. Why am I not trying?*
>
> *I have to work ten times more than my present level of working, with better intelligence and efficiency. I may not have either time or talent. Or there may not be opportunity. Or I lack stamina and may feel that taking rest gives me more satisfaction rather than working for the costly car. It is certainly not a let-down. But if I am depressed for not owning a B.M.W then it is certainly a failure.*

Climbing the unsuccessful ladder:

There are three reasons for people climbing 'unsuccessful' ladder:

1. Comfort zone: Fascinated by the newly acquired freedom, a rural student plays cards, smokes, watches late night shows. These people normally say, '*Oh! I never knew that life would be so wonderful'*.

2. Inability to change: A music director fades out being unable to tune to the changing tastes and inept of utilising the modern instruments. He says: *The youth is rustic. They don't have any sense of good music.*

3. Non-adaptation to new responsibility: An excellent screenplay writer fails miserably as a director; a good mechanic disappoints as a supervisor; and a strong union leader fails as an officer. They cover up failure saying: *I want to do something differently, but people are not able to understand my vision.*

For the next question, 'How and why an incompetent gets promotion surpassing the efficient ones?' The doctor quotes several reasons, explains different facts and analyses various personalities as under:

1. Crocodile climbers: Not every organisation can terminate all its incompetent workers. Unless the company gives promotion to at least one of its ineffectual employees, other workers in his department with the 'same level of incompetence' get demoralised and don't work at all.

> *When an incompetent employee gets promotion, people of similar competence increase their output, assuming that they could be the next in queue. In some cases, when an incompetent person cannot be removed from the organisation for obvious reasons, but cannot be given a challenging job also, a new post with an attractive title is offered to him and thus he is side-lined.*

2. Super-competent: A twelve-year-old boy repairs the fan; tells why the commode is not functioning, knows the latest websites, good in arguing, remembers everything about songs and scores, intuitive and intelligent but never gets more than average marks. Super-competent people are those who fail in their own field.

> *I know a cinematographer who used to give suggestions to his director, art director, make-up man and even to the cook. He was replaced for the next movie.*

3. Monkey brains: Next question is how incompetent gossipmongers get promotion. When the boss him-self is incompetent, the employee who talks pleasantly, gossips more and involves in the extra-curricular activities other than the office work is labelled 'dynamic' and given promotion.

A poultry farm owner wanted to give promotion to one among his four employees. He asked them to count the hens. An employee who took almost double the time was given promotion for 'the extra care'. Later when asked why he took such a long time, he replied that he counted the legs and divided them by two. When the boss has a monkey brain, the organisation would be full of monkey brains.

4. Barricade jumpers: Barricade jumpers are hyperactive and are eager to jump into the battlefield, either to kill or to be killed, without getting the complete instructions or reading the rules thoroughly.

In an aptitude test the instructions are, 'Solve the following ten problems in ten minutes, after reading the directives at the end'. A student starts answering the questions without wasting time. The first question is very tough. Second one is tougher. He wonders how anyone could solve them in ten minutes. He solves the first two problems in the given time. Before handing over the answer sheet, he finds at the end of the tenth question, 'Answer the ninth question only'.

5. Chicken heads: Contrary to the above, these people follow the rules by verbatim. They are called 'Strict rulers'. Red tape is a term that is normally used to describe the procedure of following the rules by verbatim and delaying the decisions. It generally includes the filing documents, forms, more paperwork, obtaining licenses, committee approvals etc. Red-tape slows the work, makes it more complicated.

The ill effects of red tape are portrayed in one of my stage-plays 'Rudraveena' that was enacted more than ten thousand times. To renew the pension of a retired teacher, the bureaucrat officer insists for a certificate confirming that he was alive last year, not satisfying with the document that he is alive 'this' year, because the rule says that the pensioner should submit the life certificate "every year".

6. Window shutters: These people are also strict rulers, but don't understand rules properly. Window shutters include students who are not eager to know anything outside their syllabus. These students tell the Archimedes Principle, but are unable to explain how a ship floats on water. A prolific zoology lecturer who does not know the Newton's third law, a railway booking clerk who is not aware where the waiting room is, come under this category.

There were instructions to accept cheques along with cash. Some of the clerks accepted cash and cheques but rejected bank drafts. Another funny example is a nurse, who awakens a patient from sound sleep to give sleeping pills.

7. Super-incompetent: Contrary to the above, super-incompetent people are neither good in their work nor in any other field. They miserably fail as a student, as an employee, or as a head of the family. A sales girl with more than a year experience spoils the bill books each time unable to handle reverse carbons.

A final year postgraduate fumbles with words to tell few introductory sentences about him in a group discussion. He does not keep his room neat, quarrels with parents, thrashes his younger sister and cannot pay even an electricity bill at an e-seva counter. He is said to be super incompetent.

These above traits are not different from each other. We all hold these qualities with different permutations and combinations.

Space Management:

Space management is one of the striking qualities of effective people. What is space management? When I was travelling in a small Delta Airlines flight, I was pleasantly surprised the way they arranged nine food items in a tiny tray along with forks, knives and napkins.

In yoga the exercises are arranged in such a way that after a *strenuous* work-out, next exercise would be a *relaxing* sit-out. It is also part of your drill, but gives breathing time to prepare for the next vigorous exercise. It is like going to kitchen to help the spouse when you are tired with computer work.

Space management includes adjusting the space between each task, arranging them in a way that it causes less strain to body and mind, resting while working and allowing flow from one task to the other smoothly.

A feudalist king was hosting a party in an hour with 8 bottles of wine. As the guests are about to arrive, it was found that one of the bottles is poisonous, and even if a single drop of it was consumed, the person would die after 50 to 90 minutes. The king had some prisoners to be hanged next day. He can call 8 among them and ask them to drink one drop from each bottle. But the king wants to experiment with minimum number of prisoners. Can you suggest him any solution?#

When many activities pressurise us, it is almost impossible to have a free existence. However, we can still have *a place* for everything *and everything* in its place.

Lack of space management abilities kills effectiveness. How you keep your articles in your close vicinity (depending on their frequency of requirement) to minimise the time and exhaustion of energy is also part of space management. People with inadequate space management abilities fall into the following categories.

1. Rag pickers: These people save every piece with an un-compromised belief that it may come in handy someday. They keep every piece of paper, hundreds of old post cards, pieces of electrical wires, spoiled fuses, nails, rubber bands, damaged chairs, used tooth brushes and what not. They feel sentimental about their possessions, unable to decide whether to keep or throw. The idea of 'discarding' never occurs to them. Rag pickers have to develop the tendency of giving away needless things *free* or for a small price and recognise the value of space and comfort. They should know that the value of every perishable article reduces with time.

2. Vacuum cleaners: For these people, clean desk means clean mind. Every paper is hidden, replaced by small statues or flowers. These people should ruthlessly follow the daily planners or otherwise they fail to complete the schedules under the influence of peace of mind.

3. JUNK BUNGLERS: These people are the product of bad parenting. They hate to organise themselves and are generally absent minded and short-tempered. They even don't keep the tooth brush at its place after brushing; leave the soap on floor. They find it difficult to locate their pen, books, watch and vehicle keys. These are the worst sort of space-managers who should cultivate the habit of making changes gradually starting with simple tasks. Parents should teach their children fundamentals such as folding the bed sheets on waking up, keeping the books properly after reading.

4. SINGLE SITTERS: The problem with single sitters is that they do not like to start anything 'big' that they cannot finish it in one sitting. Suppose a boy has four hours material to be completed for next day examination. He can read for two hours today night and another half next day early morning. But if he is a single sitter, he prefers to wake up in the middle of the night to complete in one sitting. He never wakes up. These people *need to re-organise* tasks into smaller and more easily compliable jobs.

(Answer to the poisonous wine bottle question: If you feel that 7 people are required, sorry… you are wrong. Three people are enough. 1st bottle - A , 2nd – B, C – 3rd, AB – 4th, BC -5th, AC – 6th, ABC – 7th.; For example, if both 'A' and 'B' die, forth bottle is poisonous; if all the three die, the 7th bottle and if nobody dies: last one).

Dignity of labour:

After a tedious journey to a remote town in Rayalaseema and a tiresome lecture, the organisers were kind enough to provide me the services of a body-massager. I was told that he is very famous in the surrounding places and is preferred by VVIPs.

The masseur came with a bag of different oils and balms. "There are three varieties of body structures, each requiring different handling. For some people it is pain and for a few it is an obsession. It is important to know the real cause before massage" he said.

Impressed by his English speaking skill, I asked him his qualification and was shocked to know that he was an engineering graduate. Rubbing down my calf muscles, the boy said "After completion of my graduation I was unemployed for a year, thanks to the recession. Then I got a job as a senior software engineer. The high profile designation was great, but the salary was nine thousand rupees per month for12 hours of work".

"I was disillusioned and knew that there was no future. My father was a barber. When I told him my proposal to switch to 'his' job, there was chaos in the house but I persisted" he smiled. "Any profession from carpentry to cardiology; interior decoration to international trade requires value added skills. I developed new methods in massaging with various types of oils etc. People liked my services. I increased my charges from fifty per hour to two hundred rupees, servicing only five customers a day. Working at my will, I earn 25,000 per month now. That is twice the income I earned as a software engineer. Besides that, I could happily stay with my parents in their old age".

I was fully convinced of his theory about the dignity of labour but still had a doubt at which he smiled, "Yes. I have to improve my status before marriage. I want to employ people and set up a parlour and a beauty centre. I have an idea to develop and market herbal creams. The best virtue any person can dream for is to have the *time at his disposal*. I am very happy following the same principle." Before concluding he said, "In fact, it is from one of your Telugu books that influenced me to do all this".

Amazed I asked, "Which book?"

"You wrote about a highly qualified boy competing with huge pizza market in your book, "THE SOUND OF EAGLE WINGS'. Every day in the early morning the boy goes to cosy and costly localities on a trolley moped with stove, 'moong dal batter' and prepares *Pesarattu* in their presence with pure ghee and serves hot *upma* with fresh ginger chutney and those rich people happily pay exorbitant price for its freshness. Later he diversifies business, becomes one of the richest… that character was my inspiration" he concluded.

Luck and money:

Should you have luck to earn money? The answer is both 'yes' and 'no'. You are a great trader in gold. Unexpectedly, the Government announces ration for petrol and diesel. The gold price collapses. You lose few million rupees.

Fearing further fall, you sell the gold and invest in shares. The unprecedented commotion in the country forces again the Government to lift the ration. Now the share prices collapse and gold price increases. You lose another few million.

This is bad luck. But bad luck is just a happening, not a *continuous* process. Some people don't start again believing that the ill-luck is chasing them. No. Bad luck doesn't chase. Our belief chases us.

Successful people are also chased by bad luck but they know how to run faster than it. *They try once again in the same field or shift to another business.* If you are not financially successful means, it is not lack of luck but lack of approach, stamina, will power and planning.

In an interview, a journalist asked me, "Do you believe in luck?" I said, "I don't trust in good luck, but believe in bad luck. Bad luck is not in our hands, but good luck is certainly in our efforts."

Wind fall luck:

Being fortunate is different from being successful. To *stay* in success, you require something more than luck. You cannot always be lucky but surely be happy with your sincere work.

Sometimes luck deceives you.

Three executives were expecting promotion for the next deputy manager post. One was dynamic, intelligent. Second was industrious and soft. Third person was lazy, stupid and a gossip monger.

The third was promoted to the next post. The other two were hurt. He was again elevated to the post of General Manager Within another three months. Humiliated by the promotion policy, one of the two executives went to the Chairman with his resignation letter. The top man listened patiently, smiled and showed him the resignation letter of the General Manager.

"Why?" the startled executive asked surprisingly.

"He joined our rival company as chief executive" said the chairman. There was a mischievous hint of triumph in his smile. The chairman said, "Yes. All the directors of our company know that he is lazy and worthless. But there are three alternatives. If we choose you for promotion instead of him, he would become more cynical and lethargic. If we fire him, we have to pay heavy compensation according to rules. We know that our rival company is desperate to win over us by taking on one of our top executives. That's how we got rid of a junk and saddled our rival with a dud for a heavy salary."

Here is another incident, contrary to the above, wherein 'luck' is supported by sincerity.

She came to the city with a mediocre degree and joined a firm for a very meagre salary. She was not happy with her hostel and joined as a paying guest. The hosts were old couple. Their two sons were married and settled in abroad.

The girl gave them much needed physical and moral support. Slowly there was a change of weather. She assisted first in the kitchen and then relieved the old lady totally from cooking. She massaged her for knee pains, read newspaper to the old man. Their solitude was replaced by the breeze of love and affection. Remember Audrey Hepburn in Sound of Music?

They started a boutique in the house. She resigned the job, looked after the sales, and the old people were at the cash counter. It developed. The children sent money from abroad. They established a big mall and now the girl is the Managing Director.

Luck..?

Yes. May be… in the beginning. But later she proved herself, developed the business, was faithful, showed her management skills and above all, was lovable.

Don't take life seriously
Take it sincerely.
Aim of life is
Outgrowing your yesterday.
Even though you are a strong believer of God,
Have faith in you.
If life is a song,
God sets only the lyrics...
But the tune is ours.

FIFTH STEP

YOUR ACTION TODAY
TAKES YOU EITHER CLOSER TO OR AWAY
FROM YOUR TARGET AND PEACE..!

THE ULTIMATE SATISFACTION

***"Did** your own people make you happy?" a journalist asked the lady in a party hosted on the occasion of her being posted as ambassador to the United States. She said, "No."*

Everyone looked in surprise. Breaking the uncomfortable silence she smiled, "Nobody makes me happy. I am happy by myself."

This answer was from Vijayalaxmi Pandit, sister of Jawaharlal Nehru. Her husband, a freedom fighter died when she was 44.

This simple but powerful answer tells volumes about peace. Nobody gives it to you. It is a divine gift to be earned all by yourself. Enormous wealth, status in the society, intelligent spouse and disciplined children altogether are hollow without serenity of mind.

A corrupt engineer amassed huge wealth, took substantial bribes from contractors to pass bills for construction of a railway bridge. It collapsed after a year and hundreds of passengers died. He had sleepless nights with fear of enquiry and raids by anti-corruption bureau. He was suspended and later terminated. He had a guilt feeling deep in the heart that he was also a culprit for the terrible human catastrophe.

After his wife's death, he joined his mother in 'old-age home', on the pretext that there was nobody to look after her. After retirement he gave part of his wealth to his daughter and rest to his son. His son-in-law spent away the windfall money in gambling. His son joined him in orphanage following the same suit.

This is called Taapatrayam, a word that is derived from two words, taapa (excess desire) and Trayam (three). The three desires are: I should be astonishingly wealthy, I should leave fabulous fortunes for 'my' people; they should be abundantly rich even after my death.

Money is the reason for both comfort and misery also. Some politicians earn even for their great grandchildren. They don't understand that they are indirectly making them lethargic and egoistic. With abundant money at their disposal, the teenagers identify success with their riches. They throw late night lavish rave parties, are caught with drugs, meet with road accidents and fail in academics. Thus these leaders spoil next four to five generations with their greed.

An accident victim came to senses after a complicated brain surgery. "Since how many days was I like this?" he asked. "Ten days" his son said. When he looked around and asked, "Is everybody here?" the answer was in the affirmative. "Then who is at the shop?" he yelled.

This is an old story that we all know. Here is the extension.

"Don't worry about the shop. Looking at the devastated car, nobody believed that you would survive. We are fortunate" his wife consoled. The businessman groaned, "Costly car… did you talk to the insurance people?"

"I am on the job," said the third son. Meanwhile, the daughter tried to instil the next shock slowly, "The doctors tried their best Papa..! But for them you would not have recovered so quickly. Unfortunately they could not save your left hand, crushed in the accident."

He looked at his severed hand. People around him were silent giving him time to digest the fact. He yelled, "The watch… Rolex watch… did you recover it from the spot?"

His second son said, "Papa! Don't get excited. Your spinal cord is damaged. You will not be able to walk forever. But we are importing a computerised electronic wheel chair that would take charge of your bath, brushing teeth and…" He interrupted his son,"What is the cost? Did you call for quotations?"

This is called Taapatrayam. People lose mental peace due to four attachments: with Life, Money, Prestige and love. Any kind of loss to them is the cause of misery. A student is unable to talk on the stage because of the fear of becoming a laughing stock (fame). A person commits suicide when he cannot pay to his creditors (prestige). Another person stops taking food when his daughter elopes. He may get a heart-stroke missing her (attachment with near ones).

Unhealthy attachment is called *Moha*. *Moha with a 'habit' becomes vice.* Great artist Guru Dutt and famous director Man Mohan Desai committed suicide after failing in love with Waheeda and Nanda respectively. Moha with TV makes you lazy, with cricket kills concentration and with alcohol distances from your family.

WEEPING FOR HAPPINESS

LAUGH IS MELODIC.
WEEP IS CHOkING.

Hearing a pathetic whine a yogi entered a house. A businessman was weeping inside. The yogi asked him, "What makes you so happy and euphoric?"

The man yelled, "Euphoric? Can't you see I'm crying my heart out?

Yogi genuinely questioned, "If you are not in joy, why are you crying?"

The businessman did not understand the question at the outset, so screamed "Swami, are you mad? Is it not natural to shed tears on losing a dear one? Don't you know that crying is an expression of sadness?"

"You are right. The more the people are around to console, the louder we cry to express our grief. We don't cry loudly if we are alone, but…" Swami looked around and asked truly "Nobody is here. So to whom you are expressing?"

The trader was taken aback, but tried to change his statement "I mean… crying is for relief."

Swami smiled, "That is the very first thing I said while entering. Does 'crying' give you relief? Are you deriving pleasure from crying?"

More confused, the tradesman was silent.

"Anyway leave it. It seems you are in a great trouble."

"Not one" he moaned, "I was declared bankrupt recently. Yesterday my wife eloped with my neighbour. Today my son married an American girl against my wish." He sobbed again, "My only friend who used to console me in times like these died an hour ago."

"So, you are missing a friend to console you?"

"Naturally! You need a person to console you when you are in grief."

"I am confused," the Swami said. "Help me understand your contradictory statements. You said that 'weeping' gives relief when you are sad. On the other hand you want somebody to console you from weeping. What actually do you want… anguish… or… relief?"

"Oh… I am getting mad."

Swami consoled him, "Tell me son. I can help you. Believe me. What do you like the most in this world? I mean… how do you relax and enjoy when you are upset and sad? Be sincere."

The trader looked up blankly at Swami who gave an encouraging smile. He said, "I cannot conceal from you Swami. I love watching item songs from films."

"Oh… The problem is solved. Play them and get relieved."

The businessman screamed, "God forbid! Are you suggesting me an item song knowing that my wife had eloped with someone? I'm really getting mad. Your discourses are bowling me out."

"But you wanted to come out of grief with the help of a friend who could console you."

"Let me make it clear." The businessman clarified "When you are in crisis, your pain subsides when tears roll out. Meanwhile if somebody consoles you, you feel much better."

"You are speaking exactly my mind. Let us set that topic aside. Tell me how badly you have been torturing your wife all these days?"

"I swear swami. The only reason she left me is for money."

"Then throw a party, celebrate and announce that such a lady is no longer a part of your life."

"Do you suggest me to go for a wall-poster campaign also?" the trader goaded. "What would people say if I appear happy? I have already become a laughing stock as my wife has eloped".

"Oh!" swami approvingly said. "So, you are sobbing for others and not for your wife leaving you. By the way… how much time are you going to sob to be voted in Public Opinion Poll as 'the best husband'? Two hours of chest beating or two months of silent sobbing?"

"Come on swami. Am I looking a nut?"

"No. Public is nuts. If you weep for a week for your wife without food, they say you are a *true* lover. If you weep for two hours every day for twenty years, they say you are mad. Ultimately they want to decide, how many days you should weep."

"I weep for myself. Not to impress others. I have sentiments. I can't be so insensitive to things. I am a sentimentalist, not a materialist."

"Sensitiveness is something different my son..! Sensitiveness is blanketing a shivering beggar; feeling disturbed when a tree is chopped off, or when a tiny bird dies due to heavy snow. It is not shredding tears over a TV serial or when you are not selected for a job. It is sentimentalism. Unlike in sentimentalism, there is no place for selfishness in sensitiveness! You are weeping not for your wife, friend and son, but for losing your social image. And you also want people to console you. But do you know? Getting consolation from a friend or watching an item song to come out of agony: both are temporary reliefs. Being philosophical is a permanent solution."

"I am religious."

"Being religious is different from being philosophical."

"What is the difference?"

"Philosophy asks you to think whereas religion insists you to believe. Religion is existential, philosophy is intellectual."

"I did not get you."

"Philosophy depends on doubt, and doubt is the mother of thinking. Religion is trust. It never doubts anything. The more you trust the more there is no necessity to think."

"I read many books on philosophy" the trader said confidently, "I attend spiritual discourse every Saturday evening."

"Reading a book or attending a personality development course, or spiritual discourse without analysis or internalisation doesn't help. *Reading is good. Understanding is better. But practicing is the best."*

The trader was amazed with this new revelation.

Yogi continued. “People go on attending discourses for temporary relief and not for finding solutions. Identify the source of your misery.”

“What should I do?” the businessman genuinely requested.

“Win the love and confidence of your son. Send your wishes to the newly married couple. Your friend died. Go and console his family. Help them if you can. Plan to overcome your financial difficulties. Forget your wife and the reaction of the society towards it.”

The trader felt a new paradigm opening within him.

“When you are in problems there are many outlets. Crying is the worst of all. People feel that it’s a natural phenomenon. Instead of wasting time in crying, look for solutions and come out of your sorrow.”

He continued, “Artificial behaviour is bad, natural behaviour is good and controlled behaviour is the best. A mother is seeing her son off at the airport, for his higher studies. She knows he would come back in two years. She still cries. We feel it’s quite natural. But it is also possible for her to send him off with a smile, a sense of achievement, tears of joy, kissing him on his forehead and blessing him to return in flying colours. What is better?”

Amazed with his words, the disciple asked, “Swami! Did you ever weep?” The Yogi uttered the following words:

“I cry for people dismantling their house
Or stop cooking at Northeast
On the suggestion of an occult practitioner,
I cry seeing a father taking his child to a hypnotist
To get a medical seat with three days of hypnosis!!
I feel sorry watching people bet on races
To become overnight millionaires
I cry for legislators watching porno in assemblies
I weep watching tiny kids going to school
Carrying bags that are heavier than their own weight”

Reason for grief:

Unhappiness is the difference between 'our expectations' and 'reality'. A corrupt official wants to have an air-conditioned bedroom (expectation) but lands in jail (result). Unhappiness..! A father wants his daughter to be happy (expectation) but she is being tortured by husband (realty). Unhappiness..!

Dissatisfaction with spouse, incurring financial loss, defeat in elections, child's failure in exams… take any case, the cause of misery is the gap. More the gap more is the worry.

There are four reasons for sadness:

1. Lack of introspection

You are waiting along with your four-year old kid on the railway platform nearby a bookshop. You spot a book that you wished to purchase for a long time. You feel excited and walk towards the shop. The train is approaching. You hurriedly purchase it and go back to your luggage.

You find the kid missing. You stand motionless, panic stricken and terrified. You notice people rushing to enter the train. You look helpless. Meanwhile you hear the departure announcement. You are about to weep in frustration and anguish. You listen the whistle and the train is about to move.

At this moment you find the kid at the toys shop peering at the dolls. You run to him, drag, pick your luggage and jump into the compartment, all at one go. You slap the kid fuming with irritation and shout "How many times did I tell you to be disciplined?"

After ventilating your exasperation, you console the sobbing kid. "Have you not seen the train arriving? Toys are interesting but what would have happened if I did not trace you in the rush?"

Good question. But did you ask it for yourself before leaving the kid in the rush, to purchase an 'interesting' book? Have you not seen the approaching train? This is the way we behave in the normal course, inviting unhappiness.

2. Lack of emotional balance

People say you have to have 'mood' for creativity. May be correct! But professional creators go by work and not by their mood. I have never seen in my forty year professional career any director or technician cancelling the shooting because he has no 'mood'.

I said in a literary interview that a commercial writer should be able to write even while standing at a bus stop. Few critics disagreed to the statement, but still I stand by it. Never say, "How can I do this under such an immense mental pressure?" Start, involve and surprisingly you forget the pressure.

There was an income tax raid at the director's house when we were engaged in a story discussion. It was indeed an embarrassing situation. After a while, the director came into our room, "My brother will take care of it. They will call if necessary. Let us continue the discussions."

That is emotional balance. Contrary to the above, I know a girl who spoiled her practical test, because somebody misbehaved with her in the crowded city bus while she was going to the exam.

3. Lack of proper understanding

One of my stage plays 'MONEY + SHE= MANISHI', deals with wrong computations. This is an age-old drama but the theme still stands as an example of wrong calculations.

The main character in the play is a mathematics teacher. He calculates that if he spends half of his earnings to educate his son and daughter each, they both would become 'clerks'. On the other hand, if he spends full amount on his son, he becomes an officer; and from his dowry he can purchase an 'officer' husband for his daughter. That way both his son and son-in-law would be officers. His calculation goes awry when his son loves and marries a girl without dowry. Taking the example of her brother, the daughter thinks that 'love' is the way to avoid dowry and a guy cheats her.

4. Present vs. Future (un)happiness

The bridegroom was in the car, waiting to take the girl. The bride's mother was holding her daughter at the door steps and was inconsolably crying. The Good Samaritan son-in-law went to the lady and said, "Saasu ma! If parting your daughter is such a pain, I leave her here. Call me when you are more composed and I will take her. No problem."

The horrified women hurriedly put off her tears and said, "No. Please take her with you.

This confirms the philosophy that all our attachments are mystic. "*Is my attachment an absolute necessity for my present happiness? Or in the long run will it lead to my agony?*" is the question. This question can be bettered like: "Should I happily bear my existing temporary agony, if it is for my permanent satisfaction in future?"

Suppose you suffer from toothache. Removing the decayed tooth gives you a momentary pain, but permanent happiness. Don't you try for a permanent solution? If you accept this fact, is it necessary to feel sorry for your misery, or scream out of pain sitting in the dentist's chair? You say it is natural…! But if you can avoid the pain under the influence of anaesthesia and can smile, visualising future happiness… is there any meaning in yelling?

The anaesthesia is emotional balance… sending the son abroad… daughter to in-law's house… with a smile.

People tonsure their head, roll on the temple steps and offer money to hundies to come out of miseries. How nice it would have been if ancestors who made these customs centuries ago, thought of doing something better to the mankind and introduced rituals such as:

One has to plant a tree before going to a pilgrimage, give half the amount to orphanages before offering to God; bear one year expenditure of educating a child on going to seven hills, feed ten people before tonsuring head, donate chappals to ten underprivileged students before going bare foot to Swami Ayyappa.

Loneliness vs. Solitariness:

William Shakespeare is the first writer to use the word 'Lonely' in his play CORIOLANUS in as early as 1608 to describe 'Loneliness' as mental emptiness and the feeling of being unwanted.

> *Your younger sister switches off the Pogo channel and goes to bed. Your parents have already retired to sleep. You are the only person studying for next day's exam. As the silence engulfs, you feel all alone suddenly.*

Constructive thinking keeps loneliness at bay. Take the above example. Think positively. Your parents worked hard the whole day and retired to bed. Your little sister is still small and is enjoying Pogo. But you have a *duty* to stay awake and study for your bright future..! 'Enjoy' the responsibility. Are you not aware, how your mother enjoys preparing a variety of dishes for you? Do you know your father is more thrilled in 'giving' you a gift than your enjoyment in receiving it from him? What happens if they do not take up their responsibilities and watch pogo channel? If you can infuse such optimistic and constructive energy into your feeling of loneliness, you do not feel depressed.

When loneliness is purposefully maintained for pleasure, it is called 'solitude'. It is a positive, pleasing and emotionally refreshing conscious choice mainly preferred by poets and artists. The extreme example was Emily Dickinson, who wrote 40 volumes of books not stepping out of her house for twenty-five years. She is my inspiration.

People think that phone or internet-chat mitigates loneliness, but psychologists say it is only a temporary solace leading to long-time misery as these types of hollow and remote relationships are not substitutes for love, because you do not know the true identity of the other person. Enjoying the beauty of nature, birds and plants is solitariness. It keeps you young and healthy. Exploit new beauties.
These stunning trees are in Poland. The cause of their curvature is unknown, but the beauty is unique.

Lovelessness is different from celibacy. The term celibacy refers to refraining from *romantic* relationships, particularly marriage. Celibacy in Hinduism is usually associated with Sadhus and Ascetics who withdraw from worldly ties for reaching the ultimate happiness and bliss. Their love is not aimed at individuals but for the universe.

Reasons for loneliness:

- Change in relationships: Frequent late night arrivals of (once loving and caring) husband, children developing their own world.
- Forceful separations: Wife staying with children for helping their studies and being away from husband etc.
- Shift to new environment: Transfer to new job, house and country.
- Loss of a long-term relationship: Death of the spouse, divorce etc.
- Age factor: The feeling of 'Nobody understands me' in adolescence; 'nobody cares about me' in old age.
- Psychological factors: Getting frustrated, not able to find happiness in worldly pleasures, feeling of low self-esteem emerging from lack of social skill after retirement, inability to sustain a relationship too long, love-shyness, social isolation etc.

Love is the antidote for loneliness. Love is a deep, tender and ineffable feeling of affection towards a person, arising from affinity, recognition of attractive qualities, and a sense of underlying oneness.

Small thrills, new relationships, attention to the small pleasures and appreciating the wonders hidden in the tiny moments of daily chores can bring joy. You can see the happiness in the eyes of the driver, when the small kid waves her hand after alighting from the school bus.

The best way to fight loneliness is to love thy-self. Pick-up hobbies like gardening, painting, reading, social service etc. Taking kids to a temple is a good hobby. Developing love towards pets and nature is another best way. The worst way is alcoholism and addiction to drugs.

Whether your day is going to be great or sinking depends on how you think when you wake up in the morning. Choice is yours.

Boredom:

As the sun starts fading behind the hills in a place like Ooty, you notice an isolated light from a dwelling on a misty hilltop amongst clouds. You envy it. You love to stay there.

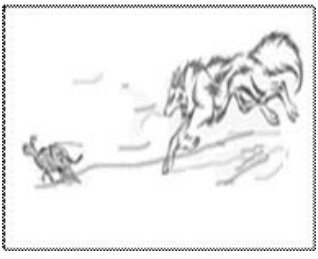
People often say, "I want to go away from this concrete jungle to a solitary place where I can spend hours alone, watching the sea waves or looking at the waterfalls. I want to be lost in the sounds of a cuckoo. Staying in a hut nearby a deep valley, I want to watch the raindrops falling from the rooftop in slow-motion and listen to their sound…"

If you ask who is stopping them to do so, they have no answer. The rationale is simple. We get bored within ten minutes watching a waterfall or listening to the sounds of pine tree leaves. We are accustomed to certain emotions. We cannot set aside our relationships. We want to be busy…or… say… be successful!

Boredom is different from depression. Depression is a cynical feeling of dying, normally associated with failure. Boredom is a feeling of nothingness.

A successful fiction and screenwriter informally told me that she got bored with everything in spite of money and fame. I told her, "Check-up whether you are writing soulful scripts straight from heart or writing just for money and fame?" She argued that movie scripts are made for the masses and if everything should come from heart, the writer lags behind in competition.

May be she is correct. I believe this problem haunts all creative professionals who feel bored, having not able to choose between creativity and routine successful pattern. My advice is, work 'two' to stay in the market and 'one' to stay with your-self.



The moment a tiger or a wolf wakes up, it runs for the prey. The moment a deer opens its eyes, it thinks of escaping from the tiger. The chase and the struggle for survival are natural under the jungle law. Fortunately we do not have such fears in the civilised society, yet we live miserably with problems.

THE PROBLEM

PROBLEM MEANS
SLIPPING INTO AN UNCOMFORTABLE ZONE
CAUSING MENTAL AND/OR PHYSICAL STRESS.

When the ship passes in normal waters, the traveller 'adjusts' to the journey. He is disturbed physically and mentally when it enters rough waters. Same way people adjust to their routine (though may not be comfortable) living. They endure physical and mental agony only when they face a problem. It is the analysis of the above three lines quote.

Problem is the first enemy to peace. At the beginning of this book life is compared to a war. What is the ultimate purpose of war? Peace..! Peace is comfort… both physical and mental.

Then what is a problem?

A problem is agony due to a financial, domestic or professional crisis, causing physical or mental strain or both..! Mental torture by spouse, losing honour, humiliation, dishonour and death of a companion trigger mental distress. Spending in jail, vehicle failure midway in midsummer, physical torture by spouse and ill health are examples of physical pain.

We are helpless about the inevitable physical pain but can work on mental stress. The way we see the problem is the problem. The intensity depends on how you take it, than how severe the problem is..!

Surprisingly, people are more tensed with problems which are 'yet to surface', rather than when they surface. For example, when a person receives court summons his heart skips a beat and he spends sleepless nights. But once he is in the court he feels less unnerved. In another example, when the in-laws harass a girl for more money and threaten to send her back to their parents, the anxious parents are worried about the future of the girl. They spend sleepless nights with many apprehensions as to how she would be facing the society. Once she returns, gets a job; and police complaint is filed against the husband and in laws, the parents reconcile to the situation. They would be more composed and start thinking about further negotiations and strategies.

If you go to people with your problem, 20% do not bother about it as they have enough for themselves, 10% pay attention sympathetically but cannot do anything about it, other 70% *enjoy* listening to it for time pass and only 1 person may help. In that sense problems help us filter our real friends from others.

A problem without proper caution becomes a catastrophe leading to crisis. 'Crisis' is defined as a crucial moment of events inviting a decision. Typical characteristics of a crisis are: Lack of clarity, mind becoming blank, dearth of connectivity between rationality and behaviour, sentimental constraints and relationship coercions.

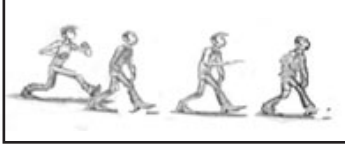
A film by name 'Beyond a Reasonable Doubt' was released in 1956 and only a few have watched it in India. An industrialist from Vizag was one among them. He narrated the gist, as if it is his own brain child. It was such a marvellous story that I collected further information and penned it. It was later made into a film 'Abhilasha'.

Everything went on well till 2010, when the remake of the said English film was released and we were all shocked. My critics started waging war. I 'did' acknowledge the industrialist's name as the original writer in the movie and in the initial version of the book. But still it was a problem. This is the best example to endorse that problems come from unexpected corners and for no fault of us.

Any problem and the solution are best presented in the form of Four Noble Truths according to the preaching of Buddha.

*The Reality (*of the problem),
The Cause (for the problem),
The Effect (by the problem)
The Solution (to the problem).

It is like a physician defining: disease, cause of disease, treatment and the recovery.



If you are in hell, keep walking. Otherwise, you would remain in there permanently. The severity of the problem continues to stay till you stop thinking of it. Ache is inevitable but misery is optional.

Problems creep up in four ways:

1. Problems created by us to others boomerang against us: A person misplaces a file at the office, comes home and scolds his son for not reading well. The depressed son fails in the exam adding one more worry to the father.

A man prayed "O God! We the men work hard whereas our wives stay at home watching the idiot box, gossiping with friends and enjoy a siesta. Is this justified?" God offered him an option for interchange for which he gladly accepted. Next day he had to wake up two hours early, start cleaning the night dishes, sweep the house, keep the tiffin ready for children and cook lunch for his wife. Then he had to go to the bank, electricity office, vegetable market and by the time his wife returned from office, he was exhausted and realised how difficult a woman's job is. In the night he prayed in a murmured tone, "My Lord..! I misjudged..! I cannot stand it..! Please give me my earlier status."

God also whispered, "I cannot help. Another bigger problem is in the offing… You are pregnant now" (Adjudged as the best 'Internet message of the year' by CELT women international organisation).

2. Problems created by fate: Devastation by tsunami, fire and accidents, traffic jam while going to examination are the examples.

Problem never knocks your door as a single guest, but is accompanied by cousins. They come in bulk. Your scooter gives trouble in the hot sun while going to the interview and you have no money for repair. You curse, leave it roadside; go to the interview, fail, proceed to the ATM and return to find the scooter missing. You are almost mad.

You go to the police station to give a report. The SI does not give an immediate appointment gossiping with others inside. Outside a policeman cracks a joke on your old scooter and you retard. It leads to heated argument. Meanwhile the SI comes out and he is short-tempered. You are also in an irritated mood. He instructs the police to lock you up for intimidating him by caste.

3. Problems by us to us: A small wound on the fingernail is more hurting than a bigger one at the bottom of the foot. We neglect the less painful wounds, which may sometimes lead to amputation.

Effective people are more cautious about the problems that cause more damage than the small ones that cause more pain.

A careless student ignores his studies till the last date and gets panicky before exams. A coughing smoker does not heed to a medical advice in time, never quits smoking and dies out of cancer. These are the problems created by us to us.

Many of our problems are due to our innocence, greediness, recklessness, fear, tension, insecurity laziness, lack of communication, over-ambition, unwarranted importance to relationships and negligence towards work. These are not problems but our weaknesses that in turn create problems. We may not be able to avoid a crisis, but certainly can overcome a weakness.

A student, who could not reply to a question due to tension in an interview in spite of knowing the answer, should blame nobody but himself for not developing communication skills and courage during his college days. A hefty person with bad food habits, who loses many opportunities due to procrastination, knows the reason for his failure but neither controls his food habits nor exercises. A person is upset when the stock market collapses as he invests all his money in shares to become a millionaire overnight, without setting aside money for future security.

4. Problems created by others to us: Co-passengers playing cards in the compartment at mid-night disturb your sleep and when you ask them to stop, counter you with jokes and un-parliamentary language. Your mood is spoiled and you lose your sleep. Same way, a friend requests you to sign a surety bond and vanishes. You attend court for many years and end up in paying the amount.

In another example, your neighbour requests you to accompany him to settle a dispute with his neighbour on the other side of his house. After a quarrel, that person gives a complaint on both of you. Police arrest only you, as your neighbour is influential. You spend a day in lock up for no fault of yours.

You might not have done harm to them, still people create problems either for money, or defame you with sadistic intentions.

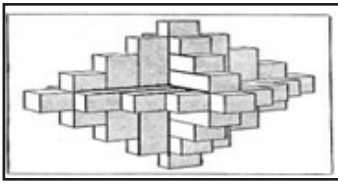
I was sued for my speech at a college in a remote town, with the contention that I degraded their town. The person who sued me demanded money to withdraw the case. His intentions were clear. I had to either travel to the far-off town innumerable times to attend the court or… pay him the ransom. I filed counter in High court, but the judge felt that such a small case could be dealt in the lower court itself. Meanwhile a sub-editor of a Daily demanded money not to publish this news. When I rejected, the paper made a sensation. I appealed in Supreme Court for quashing with the same result. I was not relenting. I filed another petition stating that there was threat to my life in that secluded town, and requested to transfer it to some other court. The High court accepted my petition and reassigned the case to another court nearer to my place. The case was dismissed as the litigant did not attend.

Three types of problems:

1. Unexpected problems where loss is not assessable:
   Unforeseen calamities like fire-accident, death of an earning member, ambulance crammed in traffic jam, losing the hall ticket just before the examination where loss cannot be assessed.

2. Problem expected but loss is not known:
   Cyclone and floods forecast, wherein people know the impending devastation in advance but don't know the quantum of the future-loss.

3. Predictable problems where quantum of loss is known in advance:
   Losing the job due to retrenchment, expenditure for daughter's marriage, admitting a child to professional course, funeral expenditure of a person with terminating illness, repairs to an old and depilated house etc.



Do you know?
It is not because problems are difficult that we do not dare to solve them, But because we do not dare, the problems become complicated.

Confronting a problem:

Courage is not the lack of fear. It is acting in spite of fear. Worrying does not empty tomorrow's sorrows. It weakens today's strengths*. You can minimise the consequences of a problem if you can evaluate six aspects:

1. What am I going to lose by this?
2. Is it my prestige, money, relationship, freedom or anything else?
3. How can I recover them back?
4. What should I do to return to my original position?
5. How much time it would take to recoup?
6. How can I minimise the time in recovering the loss?

When we are confronted by a problem, we don't think of the above six important aspects. Then what do we do? We worry. That is the difference.

Successful people think solutions to the problem whereas ineffective people think of the repercussions of the problem.

If you read the above carefully, you will find another set of five insignificant questions, about which we think, worry and spend sleepless nights:

1. Why should it happen to me and me alone?
2. What crime did I commit for this suffering?
3. Who are the people responsible for my agony?
4. How nice it would be if time reverts to yesterday?
5. How can I call on God to help me in this crisis?

We waste more time thinking about the second set of questions instead of finding answers to the first set. We struggle to find the reasons and people responsible for it, rather than searching for the solution. Keeping this in mind, let us consider the five steps (DIG-IT) to master the problem.

D - Define the issue,
I - Identify the cause,
G - Generate alternative solutions,
I - Introspect between good and sweet solutions,
T - Take action.

Residents of a village in a valley amidst thick forest across the mountains approached Drona. They were terrified and on the brink of vacating their hamlets as a horde of tigers, headed by a ferocious jaguar was attacking them and their cattle. Drona sent his disciple Dharma Raja to rescue them.

Dharma Raja stayed at the village and waited patiently till the next attack; chased the tigers into the woods and killed their leader.

The beasts returned within a month, this time in a bigger group. Drona sent Bhîma the warrior, who is the best in mace wielding (Gadha-aayudham), one of the greatest weapons that can break opponent's armour, wreck their chariots and kill elephants, but he could not fight the fast and sharp wild cats and was wounded as his weapon lacked quick reflex actions.

Arjuna was rushed to meet the crisis. He killed almost all of them with his outstanding expertise with arrows and rescued his brother. The guru complimented him "Very good work".

The disaster did not end there. After a couple of months the attack by new generation of young and ferocious tigers was more brutal and wild. Drona sent the last two. They studied the topography of the village and did the homework. Nakula involved the villagers to dig craters and construct strong fencings. Sahadeva taught them the skill of fighting wild animals and induced courage. On their return the guru said, "Best and outstanding work".

This story provides 3 clues for trouble administration.

A. Cutting superfluous branches does not solve an issue, unless you destroy the root cause of the problem. Asking a child to improve concentration by studying two hours more does not help unless the reasons for lack of attention (like lack of concentration, friends and internet chat) are traced out and eliminated.

B. Your weapon, however good it may be, must be suitable to fight the situation. Insisting a child who is a genius in literature to study zoology is like sending Bhîma to fight the tigers.

C. Final lesson: A problem is half solved, if it is seen in the right perspective and proper homework is done.

Stages of a problem:

When confronted by a problem people go through few stages, though it may not be in the same order.

1. Panic stage: Your doorbell rings at 9 in the night. As you open, a constable glares at you suspiciously, enquires your name and informs that the inspector wants you at the police station next day sharp at 8 am. Shocked you ask him the reason. He replies with a merciless smile, "Be there. You will know". You collapse into a chair. Sweat trickles down from forehead onto your cheek. The entire world appears to be engulfed in dead silence. This is the first stage of problem… Panic.

2. Denial: You think that the constable might have mistaken you for someone else. We deny a bitter fact. It helps us mitigating the initial overwhelming anxiety. A 35-year-old woman, diagnosed with cancer asks the doctor a few questions, goes and tells her husband calmly that she has a 'mild problem' that he needn't worry.

3. Inertia: Third stage is predominated by self-pity. Your mind is dumb. Entire world is happy, cheerful and sleeping well… except you. 'Why should it happen? The sinners are blissful. Is it happening only because I am innocent and truthful?' You want to weep but cannot.

4. Sharing: Men and women react differently at this phase. Men are egoistic since inception and prefer to be alone. They go into their shell. Women are different. They want to share the problem with as many people as possible. Men believe that it is their responsibility not to trouble the spouse, whereas women believe that it is their responsibility to share the burden of the husband. Women are sympathetic to listen, husbands are egoistic to talk... and they quarrel, forgetting the problem.

5. Blaming: Soon after the policeman departs the wife asks what the matter is all about. He bounces upon her. Now he finds a scapegoat to ventilate his frustration. "This is because of you" he yells, "Our neighbours might have complained as you had a war of words with them yesterday. Be happy if I am arrested now". You feel relieved by blaming others when in crisis. In another example, a wife appreciates her husband when he presents her a diamond necklace from the unexpected profits from share investment, but blames him when the prices fall, saying 'who asked you to invest in such a gamble?'

6. Suggestion: The wife calls her brother, who reaches there in haste. The Good Samaritan knows a constable in Delhi; or he vaguely remembers his friend's maternal uncle's second wife working in a court but not sure whether she is still alive or not; 'How about taking an anticipatory bail' he also suggests. Like him, many people around us are ready to bounce with their suggestions.

Consult professionals if required. If it is just for psychological support, get it from friends and near ones, but avoid taking professional advises from them.

Don't believe in people with statements like "I know the minister. You will be out of this problem in two minutes". A real friend helps us with deeds and not with words. Of course, soothing is different. Many people whom you feel "they are mine" step back when you are in a real and deep problem. Showering pity without any practicle help is a natural commotion that satisfies people. This is why onlookers gather at accident spots.

End phase: This is the final phase of a problem where our strengths are tested. There are two alternatives: Resign (Accepting the inevitability and going into depression) or Master (Searching for the solution).

Depression and self-pity makes the problem more complicated. Never feel that 'fate' is everything. Whether (1) you resign to success or (2) master the problem; and how *fast* you go to mastering stage depends on your wisdom (called 'Sthithapragnatha' in Sanskrit).

***1. Resign to success*:** You start imagining what is going to happen next day at the police station and your nightmares start bothering you… possible arrest, stinking lock-up room, third degree treatment by police, being sent to court and finally the prison. As you are rolling on the bed, your wife asks, 'What is the matter?' Yon say that you are 'thinking'. No. Instead of thinking ways and solutions, you are brooding over the matter. This is called living with problem or 'Resigning to Success'. The other alternative is mastering.

2. Mastering: Everybody goes through the above six phases when confronted by a problem. Mastery includes relaxing, collecting ammunition, and dealing with it professionally. You can fight any crisis if you have strong determination.

I met an artist when I went to pay a visit to my director, undergoing lumbago treatment at Chennai hospital. I know him ever since he was a stage artist, and as a playwright I adored him. He later became one of the best character artists in films, working for three shifts a day. Speaking about the director inside, he said, "Its hell for an active person to lie on bed for days doing nothing. Don't you agree Veerendranath?" I nodded. We had a long conversation near his car about our theatre days as we met after a long time.

Next day I read the shocking news that my friend fell down from a height while shooting, resulting in total paralysation beneath his waist. He couldn't recover from the disaster. After the incident, we met several times but I never found him talking about pain, torture and misfortune. In fact he acted in few films sitting in a wheel chair. I place my recently expired friend equal to Stephen Hawking as far as winning over disability is concerned.

Steps to fight a problem

There can be many reasons for failure in an examination: 1. Lack of ability to understand 2. Lack of memory, 3. Lack of concentration 4. Inability to write the answers properly. But don't you think that there can still be many more reasons? 1. The examiner might not be in a good mood while correcting your answers. 2. You might not have tied the answer sheets properly. 3. You might have scribbled the wrong hall ticket number. 4. Your papers might have got interchanged etc.

When there are many reasons for failing in an examination, there could be many raison d'être for bigger problems like financial disasters and court cases. Analyse them carefully. Write down various ways and solutions and glare at it continuously and you will suddenly find a new dimension. The trouble with us is that we don't plan solutions. We keep darting arrows and when something sticks, we don't think further for more healthy alternatives, but go with the one that strikes first. Keep thinking even after you believe that you've found a perfect solution. Problem solving techniques are not reserved for masterminds only. These people have a system to work through difficulties. You can also use them to solve the glitches once you learn the techniques and methods. Create a plan keeping in mind the end result and implement.

1. *Relax*: Calm down so that you can think sane and take a decision. The inspector sent you a word to meet him the next day. Think of reasons why should he have called you. It might be for an enquiry about your neighbour. Or he wanted to know information about your office. This way of thinking relaxes you.

> *As you meticulously plan out a vacation, use the same skills to solve a crisis. The difference is, the former is for a fun-filled holiday, and the latter is to liquidate a major distress.*

2. *Be composed*: Composure is the ability to remain emotionally stable in the event of crisis. Have a bird's view of the problem. If you are traumatised in the examination hall on seeing a compulsory question about which you have no idea, you forget the other answers also.

> *You try to hit the ball to the boundary. If it strikes you are the 'lover boy' for millions of cricket fans. But if your assessment misses by a flash, they burn your effigy. Whether to hit or play defense, you have to take a decision in one millionth of a second. But in real life, it is different. You have time.*

3. Collect: Be ready with all the ammunition to attack the problem. Keep money while going to the police station, to settle across the table or pay any fine. If you know any senior officials in the department call them. It is also advisable to put a word to a politician or ruffian from your locality, normally both being one. Consult your lawyer and ask him to be ready if the situation warrants his presence. Having prepared with all the ammunition, now proceed to the police station.

4. Jump: Bounce into the problem. If you don't handle it, you start *living with* it. Act immediately. We spend more time on things that can wait ignoring major problems, because of fear of failure. We hesitate to solve the problem because we think we need to have everything perfect.

> *A boy or a girl does not venture to reveal their love to parents. They wait for proper time without knowing what the proper time is and when would it come.*

Just walk in, instead of wandering in front of the police station. The sooner you enter the problem, the quicker you are relieved.

5. *Professionalise*: Don't bend your head, shiver or beg. The inspector is living on taxpayers' money. You have a right to ask why he called you.

6. *Brighten*: On seeing you, the inspector rises from his chair, smiles and hugs. The station officer is your childhood classmate and wants to give you a pleasant surprise. Suddenly you feel relieved. Face brightens. Hereafter whenever you remember that dreadful night you smile …!

> *A problem is like a thorn. One should first experience the prick to get the pleasure of relief when it is removed. Imagine life without problem or challenge. You would be damn bored. You have to have problems to experience the comfort of what it is to be without them.*

Life of the problem:

Do you remember any problem with which you were suffering last year exactly at this time, this day, this month, or maybe, this time last month? You cannot.

Believe that all problems are temporary and solvable. As you look back to a major problem that you faced ten years ago, you realise that the problem that was so colossal at that time is either diminished or totally disappeared.

Take any example... tension before the exam, problem with spouse, court case, health disorders and money matters… all the problems are just a passing phase. *Your life is longer than the life of any problem.* No problem has started from your birth and would stay till your end. Yesterday's problem that made us suffer to extreme heights, transforms into a smiling experience today. We grin remembering situations when we felt like committing suicide. Every problem is an experience and has a benefit. This appears to be strange but it is a fact.

> *I had to attend the court for the first time representing my bank. I was stunned to see that the court procedures were not as mentioned in our movies and fiction novels. The accused was neither allowed to question the witnesses nor permitted to give a resounding lecture on the evils of the society. He was not permitted even to utter a single word. Only his lawyer talked on his behalf.*
>
> *In other incident, when my uncle had a heart attack, I learnt how to call an ambulance and admit a person in an emergency ward.*

Welcome new challenges to stretch your mind. When you rewind your yesterday's major problems, they appear very insignificant today. *Now fast forward the same process*. Feel that you are in future and look back. Your present problems also appear as petty challenges.

- Half of our sufferings are imaginary.
- One fifth of the problems are the result of our earlier acts for which we have no solution.
- One-tenth problems are harmless but we still worry about them, thinking what others may think about us.
- One-twentieth problems are about health, which in turn cause more ill health.
- Remaining 15% are our real problems that can be taken care of if we don't worry about the above 85%.

The two toughest things in life are handling of *failure* and *success*. Life sometimes becomes a shipwreck but still we can swim with a lifeboat. We create our problems by wanting things to be different, people (especially our associates) to be different; we want ourselves to be different. It is like wanting the weather to be different. But the weather is what it is. We have only two alternatives. Accepting or creating an artificial weather. Opt any of the two. There is no logic in feeling miserable.

We try to resist the repercussions rather than solving the problem. But the wall is very strong. The more the resistance, the more is the worry. Accept things that you cannot change. Problem is just a situation to be dealt with, unless you are going to gallows. It is up to you whether to be pushed by problems or to be led by targets.

Do it: The best thing.

Peace is a stage where our beliefs are <u>not</u> in conflict with the realities. When you are agonised, go to people who are more agonised. Visit a cancer hospital or old-age home, offer fruits and gifts, converse with them and that makes you comfortable as you realise that your problem and melancholy are less severe.

THE ART OF SMILING

THE CAUSE BEHIND
OUR MANY MISERIES
IS… IRRATIONAL.

If you are confused about the above quote, here is the explanation. The severity of a problem depends on age, experience and wisdom. A seven-year old boy weeps for ice cream. His elder sister consoles him not to weep for such petty things and in turn weeps when her classmate avoids talking and sharing food in the lunch time. Her elder brother suggests her to take it easy, but yells noticing the phone number of his classmate in the contact list of his girlfriend. His niece teases him for spoiling his mood for such a simple thing, but cries when a boy rejects her in a marriage alliance, complaining about her skin tone. Her mother comforts her saying that she will get a better alliance next time, but creates hue and cry on knowing that her husband had a fling with a woman before their marriage. Her granddaughter (who wept for her friend not sharing food in lunch hour) asks her, "Why are you weeping for a petty thing that happened around forty years ago?"

The morale: Our cause of misery appears small to others. Hence the best sutra (to fight anguish) is to come out of the circle and look at your misery as an outsider. Simple..! This is what any philosophical book preaches us. Handle the problem with a smile.

For many, laughing brings down maturity. Parents don't allow children to laugh too much. Osho says, "Have you ever seen any saint laughing? Had it not been a far bigger miracle than resurrection, if Jesus Christ smiled on the cross while praying for people?"

Unfortunately and wrongfully, seriousness is projected as a symbol of wisdom. You are cultured if you appear to be serious and need to appear to be beyond 'normal', if you are an IIT graduate or a CEO of a multinational company or economic adviser to government. Students are not allowed to smile in corporate colleges. If you are a doctor and laugh too much, patients don't accept. Even if your patient has ordinary cold, you have to be serious as if he has cancer. The doctor, teacher, father and the priest all have to be serious; otherwise people will not take them seriously.

The art of being pleasant:

A smile is a facial expression formed by flexing the mouth muscles to express happiness. Sometimes it can also be an involuntary expression of tension otherwise called 'grimace'. A fake smile is the symbol of being phony, nervous or even dangerous.

Biologists think that smile was originated as a sign of "fear grin" traced back over 30 million years of evolution. It stemmed from apes, which clenched teeth to portray to their predators that they were harmless.

Smile releases a neurotransmitter called 'Serotonin' in the brain, a 'feel-good' hormone that keeps us energetic. Contrary to it, endorphins that are released under tension work negatively on memory and concentration. For this reason students are advised to write the exam with a grin. A smiling face gives pleasant feelings to the onlooker. You need not smile standing at the bus stop but answering in interviews with a pleasant smile certainly leaves good impression.

He was reluctant for marriage but when he saw her in an alliance, found something awesome in her but could not make out what it was. They had a long conversation and it was time to part. The girl rose from her chair, folded her hands and while going inside turned again and smiled. Then he realised that it is the captivating dimple on her cheek that enthralled him all the while.

They got married in three months. As the girl came to in-laws house she ceased smiling, may be due to the alien environment or may be for missing her parents.

He took her out and tried to cheer her, "Dear. It is your smile I have fallen for. Don't lose it. Treat my mother like yours. Do you know? After seeing you I told my parents that the marriage should take place within three months and that is the maximum time I can wait." She smiled. Then he rendered an amateurish poem:

"Your smile hit me left and right – and haunted me day and night,
I don't know whether wrong or right - My madness is at its height."

She smiled and busted into laughter.

Quoting this as an example I say, "If a smile of a girl whom you know just three months ago is so wonderful, how beautiful should be your smile to you?" After ensuring that they are convinced I conclude, "Face may be the index of mind but *smile* is the index of *soul*. Who would smile at you, if you cannot smile looking at you in the mirror?"

Have you noticed the unique quality of great people? The everlasting smile is the source of their energy. Airhostesses, Anchors and Public relation officers are trained to answer with a grin.

Just as you hum while shaving, bathing or cooking, practice smiling.

Some people believe that seriousness is the symbol of wisdom. No. The eminent philosophers, renowned leaders and great thinkers are always pleasant with an interminable smile on their face.

Categories of serious people include Masochists hurting themselves for pleasure, Sadists hurting others and Cynics grumbling all the time about life and the world. Gloomy and cheerless people should try to increase the frequency of positive emotions by performing tasks that make them happy, even though they are temporary.

Never smile at somebody's cost.

When you smile, let it come from your heart. Look at the infants smiling in their sleep. It is pure, plain and wonderful because it comes from their heart. When you remember your childhood incident or an experience from adolescence and can laugh loudly being nostalgic, there is nothing better than it, as you really mean it. "You are total only in laughter. Even in love-making you are partial" says a philosopher.

You look good when you smile with eyes. This is called '*Duchene smile*'. This expression can be practiced easily. Cover the lower part of your face with a piece of paper and concentrate on your eyes. You would soon be able to grin with your eyes.

Can a smile be practiced? Certainly yes! Immediately on waking up and brushing teeth, look at your face in the mirror and smile for five seconds… just for five seconds. It looks funny, but you would notice the difference if you rehearse for twenty days.

Happiness vs. Pleasure:

Pleasure is an enjoyable state, but the feeling is temporary. You derive pleasure when you eat delicious food, but it doesn't last long since you cannot go on eating. Pleasure is usually awakened by external stimuli and is largely physical, involving the five senses.

Though 'happiness' is similar to 'pleasure' yet it is different. Happiness does not depend on external stimuli, but comes from within. Philosophers consider happiness not as an emotion, but satisfaction of fulfilment of *Dharma*.

When do you feel happy? When a problem is solved, a good news is received, a goal has been accomplished or when you are in deep love. As happiness is a state of inner peace and calmness, instead of waiting for external events to trigger, you can always bring it from within you. Pleasure is present whereas happiness is related to the past, present and future.

- Happiness relating to past includes satisfaction, pride and serenity. It comes through satisfied life-style. When you can smile while thinking of your childhood, nothing can equate it.
- Happiness relating to present is called 'pleasure'. As discussed above, it is an excitement. It is triggered by euphoria like meeting a friend, picnic, romance and amusing incidents.
- Happiness relating to future is built on future goals and confidence.

Never confuse between 'Future hope' and 'waiting for happiness'. Living for 'ambiguous future' is futile. It is like walking towards the isolated blinking light far in the darkness with the hope that it 'is' the destiny, without any guarantee.

> *Unable to bear the harassment of her drunkard husband a woman wishes to die, but lives just for her child. She forfeits all her comforts and pleasures. He is her only - only hope. If the boy later turns out to be hen-pecked, she continues her hope on her grandchildren.*

If you consider the most pleasurable walk in the morning as a sickening responsibility, you are wasting your refreshing early hours. SUCCESS IS NOT THE KEY TO HAPPINESS. HAPPINESS IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS.

Sources of happiness:

Daily chores like helping the spouse in the kitchen, teaching children, dusting etc., can also be sources of happiness with a positive attitude. Many people do not enjoy the *present.* They believe that there is something beautiful and pleasurable in store and live hoping for it. A student wants to become an employee at the earliest to get rid of studies, earn money, watch movies and spend evenings without exam tension. An employee envies his boss for his position and power. The exhausted boss feels like retiring from stress to lead a peaceful life. For a retired citizen leisure is the biggest curse in life.

A working woman envies a home maker for her free time, whereas a home maker is jealous of the former for her financial and psychological liberation.

According to researchers, we derive happiness as under:

- 20% (just 20%) from marital pleasures, socioeconomic activities, health, income and other factors. Expecting an exciting moment in near future also keeps us happy.
- 20% is from achievements like success in exams, applause from audience and other achievements.
- 10% (again just 10%) is through actions that we deliberately engage in, such as going to picnics, movies, social gatherings etc. This 10% analysis appears to be correct, as we feel *happier* with our exam results, success in interviews and promotions rather than picnics and boggy jumps.
- 20% is from unknown factors. For example, on waking up we feel that the day started lovely without any particular reason. Even a smile from an unknown boy or a girl is enough to keep the teenager happy for days together.
- 25% of our happiness is from our genes; unbelievable but true. It is the 'in-born pleasing personality' part of us. We find some people very happy always and some vice versa.
- 5% sadistic happiness: When neighbour's son does not get visa, child's classmate does not get good marks, another artist's film flops, wealthy relative's son caught in a 'drunk and drive' case etc.

Spark in the eyes:

Children have million simple reasons for spark in their eyes. The excitement starts six months before their birthday and the gleaming kicks off with the countdown for the cake-cutting celebrations. Spider-man toys, a story from the mother, a creaky swing in the park are enough to brighten their eyes.

As you grow older the spark slowly disappears. Then how to save it..? It depends on the way you see the kaleidoscope of life. For example, when you step into the college for the first time, be curious like a child getting ready to see an aquarium or a science exhibition for the first time in his life… instead of being tensed up with butterflies in the stomach with the horrifying thought of ragging. When you attend the first interview, relish the faces and body language of other candidates, instead of trembling with tension about the result.

The spark is comparable to the flame of a lamp. What is the secret of the continuous spark in a lamp's flame? Two factors: Fuel (for burning) and Protection (against winds).

Fuel: Why your company gives you a car, furnished house and huge pay package? It is to make you comfortable to work more efficiently without distraction and worries. These comforts are the fuel.

> *Nonstop fuelling is part of our life. We work not for money and fame alone. If you think that earning Money is the biggest final landmark for success, Bill Gates would not go to work and Steve Jobs would not have struggled for a better I-phone after selling Pixar for billions of dollars. If Fame were the ultimate, Mother Theresa would have ceased to work after getting the Nobel Prize. Louis Pasteur would not have invented pasteurisation theory after the discovery of vaccine for rabies. They all continued to work because work made them happy. For successful people work is passion. It is the peace and personal satisfaction.*

Happiness in your profession is the fuel for the spark in your eyes. Fuel is not an external matter; it is inside you that keeps you alive. It could be reading for a better rank, preparing for a quiz, interacting to develop communication, playing to reach to next level of competency, cooking for the spouse, playing for the country… all would add fuel.

Protection: Fuel and fuel alone cannot keep the flame alive. We require protection. It is the positive attitude to save the spark against disappointment, frustration and feeling of guilt. From 'traffic jams' to 'unemployment' anything can be the reason for frustration. We get frustrated when our efforts do not give the expected results.

Frustration is the cousin of disappointment.

Protect yourself from the negative thoughts. After inventing the electric bulb, Edison said, "I found hundred ways why a bulb does not glow..." Continuous negative thinking makes you sick. Mentally sick people cannot think positively. They have a complex that other people are luckier than them either by birth or by luck.

True.

There are always mesmerizingly beautiful personalities in this world. They have Charm, Money, Education, Intelligence and Style..! They are more fortunate than us, supported by extraordinary rich dads, braced with astonishingly powerful political and financial connections..!

But don't you think that you are certainly luckier than many more millions of underprivileged and less fortunate people.

Happiness does not mean a new experience every day.
It means how we respond to an old experience in a novel way.
'Beautiful life' does not mean receiving a new gift every day.
It means how you look at the old gift.
Same way, trouble-free life is not happiness. It is routine.

Simple life:

We hear quite often, 'I want to live a simple life'. But what is simple life?

If you ask, a young boy says, "I have to get a job, settle in life, help my poor parents, my life time dream is to own a luxury car." A girl may say, "I don't have great aspirations to be like Bill Gates or Birla. I am not a Nobel Prize aspirant. I have simple desires".

Again for the same question, 'what is a simple desire?' the girl may open up:

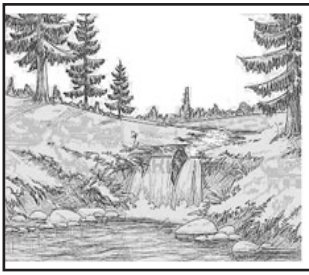
"After completion of my graduation with good ranking, I want to get a decent job and then get married. I never dreamt of a handsome prince but should be an understanding person. My in-laws should respect me. I want to educate my children with discipline and wisdom; I would like to see them in a good position. Later I want to be a good mother-in–law and then be a lovable grandmother. I want to die in my children's presence peacefully".

Is this a simple desire? If a girl gets a life as she expected above, she must be one of the few most fortunate woman in the world. Look at the number of 'wants' in the above statement. *Completing studies with good ranking, getting a decent job, understanding husband, good in-laws, raising child to top positions…* and above all she should be more than fortunate to have her children taking care of her at old age or to be physically present at her deathbed.

Fulfilment of our desires depends on two factors: 1. Our ability 2. Others. In the above example, getting a rank and job depends on her abilities and other desires (goals) depend on others. Try to do what that is in your hands, and never be too optimistic of other goals. A quote from one of my novels says *'Life is… working today <u>happily</u> for more enjoyable tomorrow and secured future*.'

You may be contended with a simple meal, but what is wrong in knowing that there are ranges of tasteful dishes available in this world? Once you know, what is wrong in trying for them? If you have to work compulsorily, either for a simple life or a luxurious life, why not work for the better?

For many people, not capitalising on the energies at younger age (to earn money, to develop an art, or cultivate a hobby) is the reason for boredom at a later stage. Boredom leads to unproductive hobbies like watching TV, long conversations over phones etc.



Living casually:

We regret having not seen Alps and Venice.
We want to see Himalayas and river Alaknanda.
But we never care to open our bedroom window to see beauty of the rising sun.
We don't plant some trees outside our house.

Peace under the pillow:

A saint lived in a jungle. He had a magical coin. People believed that whoever possesses it would never be unhappy. A person went all the way into the forest to meet him. "I will pay any amount. Please sell it" he asked. The saint politely said that it was not for sale. The deliberations continued till evening.

As it was getting dark, the host said, "It is hazardous to go through the woods in the night. Sleep here. You can leave in the morning."

The stranger was more than happy. He wanted the coin at any cost. He searched the hut when the saint was asleep and even his bed when he went for morning rituals. He could not find the coin.

When it was time to leave, the businessman felt guilty and confessed his crime to the swami, but was still eager to know where the coin was. The sage smiled and raised the pillow where the guest slept.

The coin was there! The saint told the astonished tradesman, "People search everywhere my son… forgetting that the peace is always beneath their head."

There are two ways to live life. One is, as though nothing is a miracle and the other is, as though everything is a miracle.

Wayne Dyer, the author of **'Sky's The Limit'** says, "I have eight children, and I couldn't tell you how many concerts and basketball matches I have attended for them. I pretend each time that this is the very first time I am attending. I also think myself that this is the very last time I'll ever get to have this experience. My enthusiasm soars. When you walk on the beach or attend a party, feel that it is both the first and the last time you are having this experience. This gives you a fresh eye and a sense of enthusiasm for whatever you are doing."

Being happy
Is not that everything is perfect.
It is looking beyond imperfection.

Life as a pleasant film:

You are the director, story and screenplay writer for the picture of your life. Each film has a different story and so has each person; could be from rags to riches, single man fighting against all odds, a boy chasing girl etc. The screenplay should be perfect if you want to celebrate a splendid 100-days function.

No doubt there would be some tear jerking sentiments, problems and horror moments, but as a scriptwriter you can always plan to solve them. Whatever may be the theme, the undercurrent must be happiness, melody, comedy, adventure and above all 'love', but not a tragedy. We enjoy films like 'Devdas' because the story does not belong to us.

The camera-lens is your wisdom through which you see the world. Your attitude is the focus lens that confines or enhances your vision. As a technician checks the brightness with a light-meter to avoid the film being gloomy, check regularly whether life is dim or too-bright. Proper 'light-meter' means planning of short and long-term goals.

In close-up shots people come nearer to us and in trolley shots we go closer to people. Top angle is for bird's eye view of the situation and low angle is to pray God; the zoom-outs are to enlarge the situation and zoom-in is to see the nucleus of the problem.

We add on creativity while shooting the film. Creativity is nothing but inventing, experimenting, changing the screenplay, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes, learning from experiences, forgetting tragedies, having fun. That is our 'growth'.

The interval is to relax back and think how the film is progressing. Every night is an interval to introspect the day's work whether we are correctly and happily proceeding towards achieving goals of affection, family relations, fame and prosperity.

Working for the silver screen is a fascinating job. Hence no one wants to leave the field despite its uncertainty. Same way nobody wants to die except few cowards, despite the adversities of life.

The picture is a hit, if the audience leave the theatre satisfied. Even it fails, you can give another try. It is called 'tomorrow'. At any cost, the end shot (final result) should be 'peace'.

THE FINAL FULFILMENT

"FEAR NOT.
WHAT IS NOT REAL WAS NEVER THERE
AND NEVER WILL BE.
WHAT IS REAL WAS ALWAYS THERE
AND CANNOT BE DESTROYED"

Perfect administration of life is to reduce the gap between 'what is happening' and 'what we intend to happen'. There can not be any better definition than this.

The old saying that 'the man lives like a cuckoo for first 20 years wandering how to construct a nest, like a donkey next 30 years carrying the burdens, like a dog for 15 years taking care of the house; and after retirement like a monkey going from one son to another, doing tricks to amuse his grandchildren…' is the negative side of a truth.

Life is really beautiful if you lead it in a correct perspective. Non-attachment brings wisdom and freedom. Understand the concept below, that is one of the best 1 have ever read.

The 3 best combinations: Gnana, Bhakti and Karma lead us towards our goal. We also have three kinds of temperaments: Rational, Emotional and Active.

To attain perfection, we require three types of combinations:
Gnana for rational thinking, Bhakti for emotional involvement and Karma for philosophical detachment.

Unfortunately we live with wrong permutations, Gnana with *disinterest*, Bhakti with *irrational questioning* and Karma with *emotional involvement*. Wrong combination of the above three is the reason for all our miseries.

The above theory appears to be simple but if deeply analysed, you would find that the Saints in Himalayas as well as people with a serene life followed the same philosophy. How can a person be at peace if he prays in the temple and involves in corrupt practices again? How can a student succeed if he feels that education is just for the exam and not for acquiring knowledge? How can a Baba who preaches detachment with worldly pleasures, cheat himself spending with lady devotees in private? How can a lady be cruel to her seven year old servant girl after attending to Bhagvad Geetha discourses every evening?

Meditation, peace and satisfaction:

There is hardly any individual without experiencing the ill effects of stress and who doesn't want to get rid of it. But it is not such an easy task. Those who practice succeed with *real* meditation can only experience a stress - free life.

Anger, pride, hatred, envy, greed and insecurity are the external factors that pressure our nervous system. But these stress factors influence us only if they are supported *from within*. If we are strong-willed, they can't affect us.

It is beyond our capacity to avoid the external factors totally, but it is possible to reduce their effect. The Jain philosophy finds the answer to tension in the technique of '*preksha dhyana'*; through which it is possible to be free from the tension originated from internal factors.

Some Gurus ask you to go onto the hilltops or stay underneath a pyramid or sit in a burial ground. Some others suggest you not to talk to anybody for months together. No. Meditation is a stylised mental technique, characterised as bliss; and practiced for attaining a restful, silent and of heightened alertness.

It is the consciousness of inner self… the *soul*. The discipline of the mind, speech, body and breath is essential to meditate. During this cycle of practice, have deep faith in the adopted system of *sadhana*. Everything goes off the hook in the absence of faith or devotion. Here is an old story we all know.

A *village hit by severe draught was on the verge of a disaster. Even the birds have emigrated. A priest assured performing the rituals will please the rain Gods. He asked them to bring any article showing their faith in almighty.*

On the propitious day people gathered with what they could offer… coconuts, incense sticks, flowers, ornaments etc. The ritual began. It had been hours but there were no signs of rain.

*The villagers lost their hope. At this juncture, a boy came running with the guilt feeling of being late, holding an article in his hands. Along with him blew a cold breeze and within minutes there was a cloudburst. And the article that the boy brought was an umbrella.**

If meditation is pleasure involving all the sensory organs, we should take a lesson from the kid enjoying his icecream. As told earlier, he enjoys the colour with eyes, smell with nose and taste with tongue. Don't you agree that it's also a kind of meditation?

Meditation teaches selflessness. According to Patanjali, there are eight practices: ethical discipline, physical postures, breath control, union of the self with omnipresent etc. It is not simply closing the eyes and hallucinating for hours. Meditation is for losing the greed covetousness. When there is greed there is a loss. Here is an example.

A girl met a charming boy in Facebook. After one month deep love, he wept in phone revealing about the failure of his two kidneys that required three lakh rupees. The girl stole gold and money kept for her sister's marriage and gave it to his friends, who said the boy was in hospital (In fact he was also one of them). He disappeared after receiving the money. When police caught the culprit it was a shocking revelation. The boy was a dwarf.

Belonging to job is meditation. It never preaches escaping from problems or work. You find a real meditator in a player, painter, musician or a scientist. It is like concentrating on hair while combing; focussing on the book while reading and being ecstatic in a picnic.

A producer took me along with my co-writer to a Baba, who asked us to close our eyes and one nostril and concentrate on our breath. He asked later how the experience was. My friend said it was excellent. "Do it every day. You will feel relaxed and will know what the ultimate bliss is," he advised. But my friend disagreed, "This is what I do when I sleep. Why wasting productive few hours in daytime for this? May be this technique might suit those people, who don't derive pleasure in their work or those who don't get good sleep in the night. I feel it is not meditation. It is just a hallucination of being relaxed. Why should I forcefully sleep when I feel ecstasy in my work itself?"

Our producer hurriedly took us away from there, to avoid confrontation with his guru.

I felt that there was sense in my co-writer's argument. He is a personality to watch out.

Everybody except him was drinking at a social function. I enquired whether he was not interested. He said, "I like booze immensely. But I am thinking about my next work".

I probed, "Even while enjoying a drink you can think of your work."

He smiled, "I want to enjoy writing rather than drinking. For that matter, drinking gives me more kick and ecstasy than writing" he paused for a while, "But writing gives me the pleasure. I am unlike you. You can control; but I am scared that I don't have the capacity to come out of that trance and work for earning money, fame and permanent satisfaction."

His statement is an example to understand how to prioritise between an *interest* and a *commitment*. I learnt a lesson from him.

I want to share something interesting about a meditator who had great influence on me. His name was Epicurus. The proverb 'Eat, drink and be merry' comes from him. People talked bad about him. Even I had a wrong opinion before reading about his life two decades ago. Then his way of living inspired me to the extent that I realised, changed and adapted the philosophy to my life. Unlike other saints, he says, 'earn to enjoy, enjoy giving; earn not to hold, but to distribute, work not for earning but for passion.'

An Indian philosopher tells about him:

"I feel deep affinity with a man who was born two thousand years ago in Greece. His name was Epicurus. People think that he was the most materialistic person opposite of the religion. No. he was a 'naturally religious' man. He lived as simply as anybody has ever lived. A Mahavir or a Buddha had dropped all that was unnecessary, but their simplicity was cultivated. They had been disciplining themselves to be simple, and whenever there is discipline, there is complexity and a fight in the background.

Epicurus had no academy like Aristotle, or a school like Plato. He lived in a small garden with a few friends known as Epicurus' garden. That was probably the first commune, more natural than an academy.

They were just living there, working and having enough to live.

The King thought that this man must be living in luxury because his motto was: Eat, drink and be merry. "If this is the message," the King thought, "I will see those living in luxury and in indulgence be taxed or punished for evasion of it..."

But when he arrived he saw very simple people working in the garden watering trees. They had very few belongings, enough to live. When they were having dinner in the evening, there was not even any butter. But they enjoyed as if it were a feast. After the dinner, they danced. The day was over and they offered a thanksgiving to the existence.

And the King wept, because he had always thought to condemn Epicurus. He asked, "What do you mean by saying, 'Eat, drink and be merry?"

Epicurus said, "For day and night we are happy here. We are simple because we are not seeking God. If you want to be happy you have to be simple. The more complex you are, the more hopeless you become. If you beleive that God created your sorrows, is there any point in praying him for their removal?"

And the King said, "I would like to send some presents for you, and your community."

"Don't be offended; you are a great King and can give everything! But we don't need. If you insist, send a little salt and butter."

He was an austere man. In this austerity, religion happens naturally.

Epicurees says, "You don't think about God, there is no need to; life is God. You don't pray with folded hands towards the sky; it is foolish. Your whole life is a prayer from the morning to the evening. Prayer is an attitude: you live it, you *don't do* it."

Epicurus could have understood Patanjali.."

Listening to the silence on the hilltops
Able to perceive the sunrise in sunset
Keeping a faith
Understanding the smile of the saints
And
Commiserating others in their language..!
That is real prayer
Love is beauty... Beauty is selflessness.

SUCCESS

DON'T BE SURPRISED
SUCCESS IS NOT THE ULTIMATE.
IT CAN BE SOMETIMES TEMPORARY,
UNPRODUCTIVE AND WORTHLESS.

W.B. Yoats in his poem 'Mount Menu' (Peak of Himalayas) describes the philosophy of life. Success need not give pleasure always. It can be temporary sometimes, worthless and also lead to gloominess. We feel that we won, but that could actually be a defeat. These unproductive successes comprise of following categories.

Temporary: You cross the lane when the red light is on, escape when police chases you and feel that you are successful. The result may not be same next time. You may feel elated faring in the exam superbly by copying. You can be a hero before your friends driving at 100KMPH but the time is not always yours.

A car in front of us knocked down a scooter and sped away. I thought the rider was dead. My friend at the steering chased the car, overtook it within few minutes and caught hold of the driver, who appeared to be owner of it. I was expecting that my well-built hyperactive friend would trash him. The owner was shivering. But it does not happen so.

We reversed our cars and returned to the accident spot. I assumed my friend would expose the culprit to the wrath of the public and make him pay compensation. It was a hit and run case and public naturally would be furious. My friend's behaviour surprised me. He was watching the scooter rider. He was not seriously hurt. His shirt was wet evidencing that somebody helped him to wash his face. He started the scooter and drove away. Watching him go in front of us, my friend turned towards the owner and said, "Now you can sleep happily tonight".

Still I remember his reaction. He did not speak a single word but joined his hands with tears in his eyes.

The car owner might have felt that escaping from the scene was success, but it would have left him with a guilt feeling throughout his life. Success thus sometimes can lead to un happyness also.

Worthless:

I was watching an exciting world cup food ball match two decades ago between America and Colombia. America was a weak team but as it was the hosting country, the whole stadium was noisy supporting it and even the commentator was not heard. When the match was about to close in a draw, I never thought that it would lead to such a tragedy.

A Columbian player kicked the ball out of their borderline to save a goal. Another Columbian player by name Escobar placed his foot against the ball in all good faith, to avoid the corner. But unfortunately it turned into his own goal post. The goalkeeper was unprepared.

The entire auditorium, full of American supporters stood in elation. A country that considers football as their religion was not qualified for next round. The betting mafia in Columbia killed Escobar after few days.

In another incident, the workers of a tiles factory at Yanam in the union territory of Pondichery were enraged by the death of their union leader. Influenced by the cold war between the politicians, they beat their director with sticks and killed him, destroyed the factory, ransacked the premises, set fire to plant, looted the office and took away the computers and other material.

The management announced lock out first and later closed the factory. That was the biggest exporter of tiles from India. About 1200 people lost their jobs and migrated, which in turn had affected other trades and lives of fishermen. Now the small town wears a desolate look.

People who are behind the above two incidents, both foot-ball mafia and politicians might have celebrated their triumph but is a worthless success.

To defeat somebody is easy. To win somebody is difficult. Killing people, humiliating a weaker person, torturing spouse, exhibiting neo-riches, paying God for immoral acts may give satisfaction but are examples of worthless successes.

Complete success:

When Anand was returning late from office, a burglar attacked him with a knife in the dark. He did not know that Anand is good at karate. In the shuffle, the knife wounded the thief in the belly and he died later. The judge did not accept the self-defence theory and convicted him for 6 years.

The meagre amount that his wife was earning was just sufficient for feeding their two children. Their financial position was miserable and there was no backing by elders. The first few months were gloomy, dismal and depressing.

Then he started writing articles and sent to magazines from his cell. The fiction, based on the life histories of prisoners clicked. Soon his income exceeded his earlier salary. He was friendly to all, grew vegetables, cooked and taught yoga to prisoners.

Anand says "Imprisonment taught me that there are more unfortunate people in this world. I am an acclaimed writer now. But for the jail experience, I would have been a normal employee. I cannot change the fate. But I can change myself according to fate."

Success is ability to laugh often, to win the respect of the intelligent, affection of children, appreciation of critics, will to enjoy the beauty, leaving the mark when leaving. There is no better enjoyment than commitment.

A king went through his kingdom to monitor how the people are working. As he moved on his elephant, everybody rose to greet and salute him. But a roadside cobbler was engrossed in his work, unmindful of the king's presence. The irritated king asked, "Why should I not hang you for your insubordination?"

"My lord" said the cobbler, "Leave alone rising from my seat...! Even if I lift my head, the needle will make a wrong hole and a damaged shoe would be produced in our country. That's why I did not salute you." he continued, "If you excuse me, I would dare to tell you that your job is to watch us, and ours is to work. You do yours and let us do ours".

The king went down from the elephant and hugged the cobbler.

The ultimate success:

As we reached the closing chapter, let us have a final question. What is success?

Living like a kid is success.

This requires explanation. Let us first try to understand what failure is. In one sentence, failure means living in continuous state of grief and misery, worrying about present and future.

Watch out any kid. There are no failures for kids. He plays, fumes, smiles, laughs and jumps but never ever would he be sad. You may dispute saying that the kid also weeps. But that is only a weapon that he uses to get whatever he wants. Nevertheless, if he does not get it, he *forgets* about it and engages himself in his play. We never find him being 'sad, sorrowful and unhappy' like *us.*

The biggest worry for us is that we cannot resolve on factors that cause us worry. The doctor says, "If you want to live for more stop booze and cigarettes". We cannot decide whether to stop them and live for ten years dryly or enjoy them and die in three years. Indecision..! Whether to concentrate and study well or enjoy like others? Vacillation..! Whether to stay with husband's torture or leave him? Decidophobia..! Whether to stay with the children abroad or join an old age home here? Uncertainty..! The reason for all our unhappiness is not being able to enjoy the 'present'.

If you accept this definition, living like a kid is success. Children need not decide on anything.

We have already discussed about the Shadwidha Aiswaryas… health, fame, money, wisdom, love and enthusiasm. Developing them with a strong desire, soaked with emotion, powered by passion, driven by destiny and forged with the fire of the heart is **success**..!

Let us attribute it to kids. Kids are mentally healthy. They have no fear of future. They are not jealous. They have fame as everybody loves them. Their elders love them unconcerned of their beauty and intelligence. They are enthusiastic to know new things. Within first five years of growth, they acquire amazing wisdom.

Next virtue is money. Are you rich enough to get whatever you want? Can you purchase your desired article without seeing its price tag? Kids get them (toys and chocolates) from elders whenever they want. If they don't get it, they know how to get it, and in case they are sure that they don't get it (being poor, orphan), they know how to *forget* it. They are not greedy.

Another biggest virtue for them is that they can sleep whenever they want. They don't live by time. *Don't you accept that having time at one's disposal is the most successful achievement in life?* If you feel like sleeping for an hour, is there any better fortunate thing than be able to sleep at the immediate moment? Even the Prime Minister cannot afford to do it.

If Smile on the face, satisfaction in life, hope for future, and happiness are the combination for complete success, every kid has it.

Do we have?

A man is a success if he gets up in the morning and goes to bed at night and in between does *what he wants to do*. If this is the definition for success, can we do it? A child can do it.

It IS success. Success is love. Loving your past, present and future…! Not praying God. Loving God is happiness.

Love is Beauty. Beauty is Happiness. Happiness is peace.

What is peace?

Love for tree is peace.
Love for music is peace.
Talking to flowers
Ability to enjoy the silence
Being able to listen to other's misery is peace.
Peace is understanding
The sadness of others in their language.
Never be a reason for others sorrows
And source for your miseries.

EPILOGUE

Hi dear,

I never thought that I would be writing this letter to you. The feeling that the gap between us is widening up gradually, is prompting me to write.

A bridge between two high cliffs can be built upon, but not between two drifting souls. Even then an effort is always worth making. It starts with hope; the hope for reconnection.

Hence this letter..!

I recall your memory to the day when your mother introduced me to you. I know you, but 'you' met me for the first time. We both saw each other. My glance was filled with appreciation and your looks were mischievous, lovely and reverent.

I still remember the adulation, ecstasy, innocence and the salient and silent feelings in your eyes. I do not find those looks or feelings anymore now. I am not demanding your explanation as I understand that the *cruelty of time* makes many subtle emotions disappear.

You lost me in the jungle of struggles. I don't mind it, but you have lost even your first and foremost relation, your parents. It had indeed been a very long time since you had an affectionate talk with them. Don't forget. Your children (sorry… our children) would pay you in the same currency one day, when your bones start slackening in your body.

I don't dispute your desires, your thirst for riches and your temptations for comfort. Your agenda of desires is big, but I wish to know why I am *not* there in it.

I still cherish those moments that you might have forgotten, when we were swimming in the lakes in summer, sitting near the fireplace in winter, listening to the drops of rain in monsoon and cuckoo's sounds in the spring. We have travelled many pleasant dreams together. Those dusty mornings and the misty evenings still haunt me.

There were so many colours in your company and so much of silent music that we listened together.

I would not complain had you been a happy person without my company and a pleasant soul by yourself. Except the deafening silence and the frightening darkness, nothing remains now around you in the house.

I watch you the plethora of emotions while you are sleeping. *You exhale happiness and inhale the tensions.* Your innate serenity in the sleep is burdened by the stressful living. Your agitated movements worry me. I resist my temptations to caress to console you. But why should I care? Even I am egoistic.

But I can understand. The tensions cast a spell on you to wean you away from me. Sometimes when I notice your rare smile in your sleep, I innocently mistake that you are thinking of me. Hence I embrace you gently to relieve you from the pressure emitted by tense life. I feel the relief in your breath.

And you wake up in the morning. I expect you to wish me and share a few feelings, but you rush to refresh. My optimism still hopes you would come fresh and wish me. You come out. You walk towards me. I hold my breath as you come nearer. But oh..! You pass by me as if I never existed.

You are more worried about the breakfast and the dress to wear. How wonderful it would be if you share a hundredth part of these minutes to spend with me.

Then it is time for you to go to the office. I am sure you don't think of me there.

I wait for you to return early. But you spend quality of time with friends and come home late. Then you watch TV for hours until midnight. I hopefully expect you to come nearer to me so that I can embrace you with love, cover you with a blanket of affection and make you sleep comfortably. Strangely you prefer to embrace the problems.

The matter is no different on a holiday. You relax your limbs in an easy chair and glare at me, as I stand opposite to you. After few minutes, you raise from the chair.

For a fraction of a second I think you are coming to me. But you pass by my side, to call a friend on phone and talk with him for hours together, spending *important* moments for *unimportant* matters.

The poets and painters tell us umpteen times. *If you cannot adore nature you can't love anybody*. The tragedy multiplies when you are unable to love the first person. That is you. How miserable to know that you have lost yourself, forgetting *you*.

Dear…

I am not expecting your care and concern. In fact I give them to you. I even do not need your repentance, your devotion or your offerings.

I am patient. Don't remember me only in the hours of crisis or in the moments of sorrow. Think of me in happy moments also.

When you can earmark five minutes to clean your teeth and ten minutes to cleanse your body, it is ironic that you do not find time to clean your conscience, the most important thing.

If you are ready for it, I would be happy to meet you again.

Yours affectionately
'Me' in 'you'
The GOD

THE 5 STEPS TO SUCCESS

The word 'Satagopam' emerged from the original Sanskrit phrase 'shat (six) gopyam (secrets)'. The devotees are blessed on their head with the silver crown twice; once to pull out 6 evils: Kama (lust), Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada (pride), Matsarya (jealousy). The second touch is to infuse six riches: health, wisdom, prosperity, love, fame and the ultimate satisfaction.

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Yandamoori Veerendranath is a rare come-together of an accomplished Charted Accountant, a popular writer, a successful film technician, a motivational speaker, and a motivating columnist for The Hindu. He won the Sahitya Academy Award for his contributions in literature. His unique insights, lateral expressions and down to earth solutions leave a persuasive mark on our attitudes.

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